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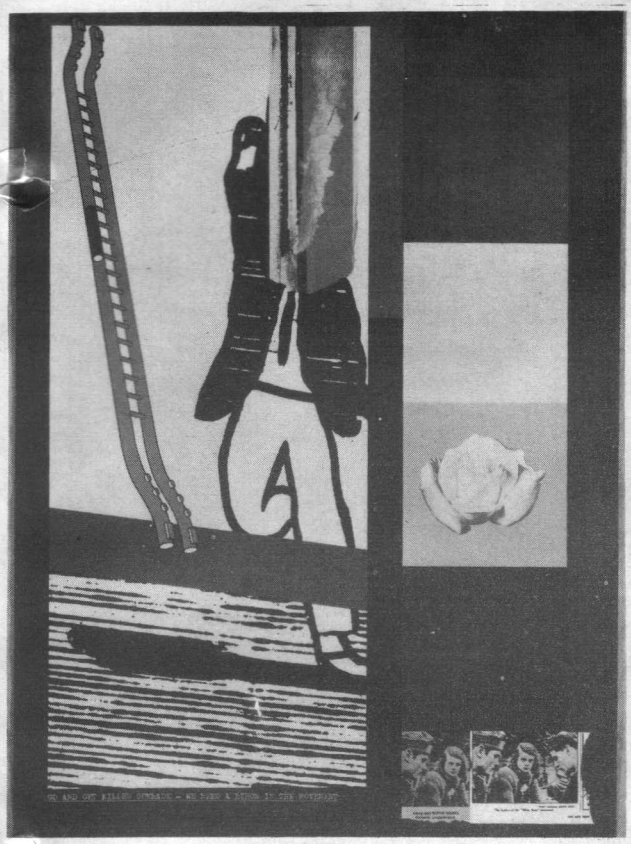


Fig.[4] R.B.KITAJ
GO AND GET KILLED COMRADE:
WE NEED A BYRON IN THE MOVEMENT 1966.

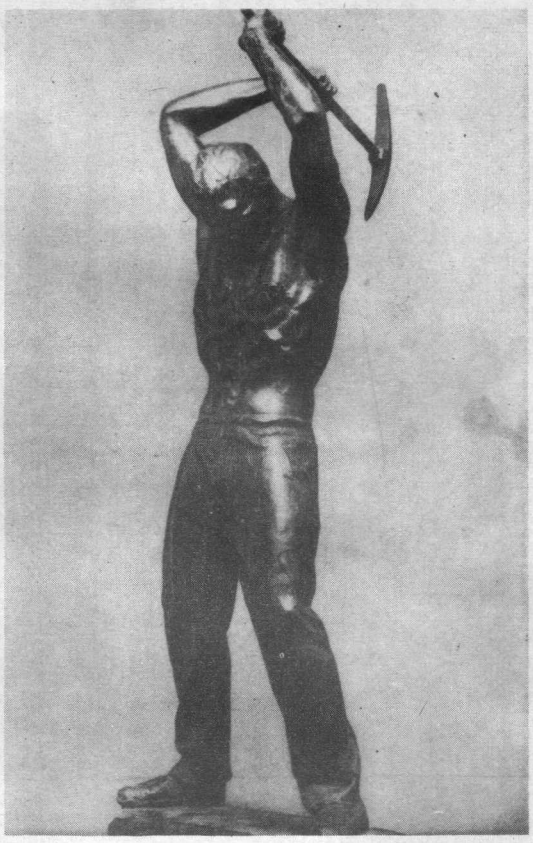


Fig.[3] MAX KALISH
ROAD WORKER (no date given)

Fig.[6]

R.B.KITAJ (b.1932)
THE AUTUMN OF CENTRAL PARIS
(AFTER WALTER BENJAMIN)
Oil on Canvas.

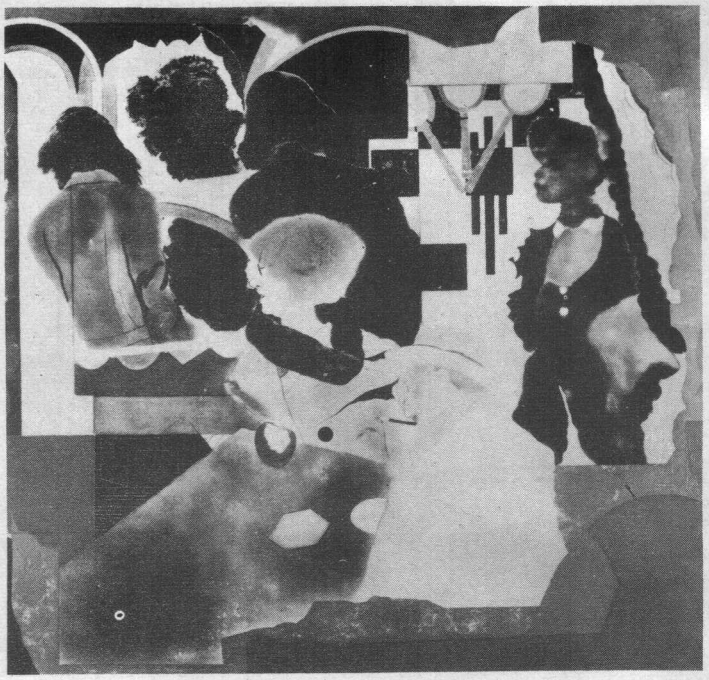
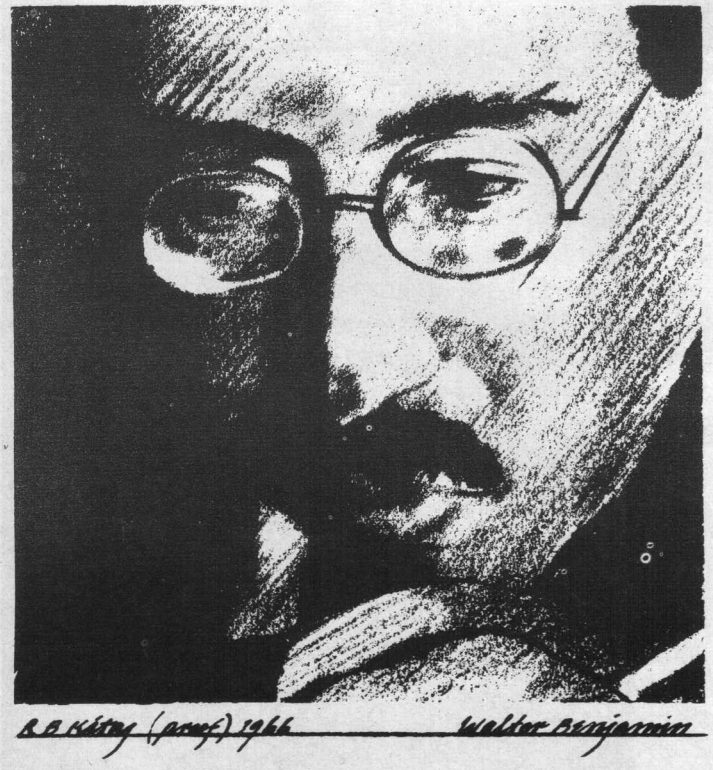


Fig.[5] R.B.KITAJ
ARCADES (After Walter Benjamin) 1972-73.



The Frankfurt School in the Development of the Mass-Culture Debate

EUGENE LUNN

Now that the Frankfurt school's critique of the "Culture industry" has been widely discussed and debated, its outlines generally well known, it is worth posing again the question of its historical meaning. One indispensable way to approach this would be to ask: what is the relation of the "culture industry" analysis to the history of the mass culture debate as a whole, the politically freighted, seemingly endless stream of evaluative writings on the subject which originated in the late eighteenth century and have proliferated especially since the 1920s? In this essay I will assess the validity of previous, generally implicit, historical patterns which have been suggested – in particular, one that is based on an analogy between conservative elitest and Frankfurt school attacks upon mass culture. After that, I will present an alternative reading which seems to make more sense of the Frankfurt school's relation to Nietzsche, Arnold, Ortega and Eliot while at the same time showing the shared historical ground and discursive bonds which link Adorno and his colleagues to the various mid-twentieth-century liberal *defenders* of mass media or consumer culture.

Most serious writing on the Frankfurt school, when it has engaged the mass culture debate, has concentrated upon conflicts within the orbit of the Institute (most notably, between Adorno and Benjamin), or between various figures or groups within the development of western Marxism since Lukacs and Gramsci.[1] This has been important and has helped to clarify the rich diversity and complexity of twentieth-century Marxist cultural theory. All the same, a broader focus which traced left intellectuals' responses to popular culture since the late eighteenth century would enable us to understand the historical significance of what Brecht, Gramsci, Benjamin or Adorno had to say on the subject. It might illuminate

for example, how twentieth century Marxist cultural theory has tended to unravel and polarize the inter-woven popular and elite strands in Marx's own ambiguous and multi-valent synthesis. Even more valuable, however, would be to break out of left-wing parochialism, which the Frankfurt school had done, and investigate the relation of the "culture industry" analysis to the wide variety of historically shifting and nationally diverse conservative or liberal approaches to folk, popular consumer, or mass culture. This would involve, of course, careful attention to the specific ways in which "popular" and "elite" culture are seen to inter-act.

There has, of course, been one persistent manner in which Frankfurt school aesthetic theory has been compared to social and cultural analyses originating outside the left. Many liberal, and some left-wing, writers have focused on the fact that Adorno and his colleagues (with the exception of Benjamin in his Brechtian moments) share with conservative or reactionary writers like Nietzsche, Arnold, Spengler, Ortega, Leavis and Eliot a common disgust with mass culture.[2] Such a comparison is usually framed as a wideranging indictment. The usual charges are that both the Frankfurt school and conservative cultural critics are ascetic-minded puritans disdainful of the hedonistic fun most people seek and generally find in mass culture entertainment; that they share a regressive longing for a society before the rise of industry and mechanical means of reproduction (press: cinema, radio, television, etc.)and before the full entry of the middle and lower classes into political and cultural life; and that their common aesthetic reliance on a pristine model of high culture, available only to select initiates and untainted by vulgar mass enjoyment which suffer by comparison, is rooted in an elitest desire for a hierarchical society culturally and socially dominated by privileged people such as themselves.

Such a critique forms the major part of what is the most common historical patterning of the mass culture debate. In what is a kind of cultural whiggism, the nineteenth-century aristocratic attack on cultural democracy is said to be absorbed by the disillusioned Marxist left (after the debacle of European socialism in the inter-war years and the rise of fascism) and is then corrected after the 1940s by an empirically-grounded defense of a democratic, pluralist leisure industry. (But the regressive elitests still persist, according to this scenario, and need correcting, so the debate continues). In Marxist or left-populist versions of this historical scheme the conservative and disillusioned, elitest-left phases are succeeded by an

understanding of sub-cultural class, ethnic or gendered forms of resistance instead of mere "consumption" of cultural commodities.

How much validity is there in this historical discourse which includes pivotal claims of an elitest, ascetic and regressive Frankfurt school Beginning with the central first issue, it is hard to deny some justice to the elitest charge, *especially* if aesthetic and cultural matters are isolated in the analysis. Most writings of Frankfurt school members, and especially those of Adorno and Horkheimer, do invoke high-cultural aesthetic models when judging the merit of culture-industry products. In Adorno's notorious 1930s writing on jazz, for example, which are generally regarded as his most biased and Euro-centric (in a mandarin sense), rhythmic syncopation in Beethoven's music, "which rises up against existing law until it produces out of it a new one,"[3] is contrasted with the illusory subjective power, arbitrarily revoked and purposeless, of pseudo spontaneous jazz syncopation. Whereas a Beethoven sonata encourages active listening, he writes, jazz is often received as background music or used for mentally inactive dancing.[4] When reading Adorno—who, ofcourse, set rhe tone for much of the Frankfurt school's analysis of the culture industry, and who will therefore be emphasized in this essay—it is difficult to avoid the impression that we are confronting another transplanted, highly cultivated, *haute bourgeois* European who simply cannot fathom what is, on occasion, vital, fun, sometimes healthily rebellious and even aesthetically appealing (Chaplin, Astaire, Duke Ellington, for example) in commercial film and popular music. At the very least one would expect a more nuanced sense of the contradictory aspects of audience reception.

It is difficult to avoid such a reading, but it is necessary to see that it is true to only a limited extent. In general, the obvious abuse of the term "elitism" in recent decades should put us on guard against its overextended deployment. More specifically, as a guide to the reading of Adorno's Horkheimer's. and Lowenthal's writings on culture the epithet is often misleading, a fact which becomes apparent once close attention is paid to what is actually being said. This should not be surprising, for the purpose of such sweeping and unqualified polemical formulae as "elitism" is often to cut off further study and thought.

For one thing, Adorno and his colleagues, unlike most of the traditionalist cultural critics to whose work the term applies, pointedly

refused to privilege culture as a higher realm which is said to rise above material reality; in their view such idealist aesthetics served to obscure and obscenely compensate for otherwise more visible social injustices and suffering. The Frankfurt school followed Marcuse's analysis of the "affirmative" tendencies of such conservative notions of culture,[5] and strenuously sought to show how *all* cultural life is tainted by its inevitable complicity, in class societies, with forces of political domination and social oppression. In his essay "Cultural Criticism and Society," a trenchant critique of idealist aesthetics. Adorno wrote : "...all culture shares the guilt of society... It ekes out its existence only by virtue of injustice already perpetrated in the sphere of production .."[6] In his last work *Aesthetic Theory* (1969), he bitterly commented "Those cliches about art casting a glow of happiness and harmony over an unhappy and divided real world are loathsome because they make a mockery of any emphatic concept of art by looking only at perverse bourgeois practices such as the employment of art as a dispenser of solace."[7] Insisting that high culture as well as popular culture be treated as the part of the shifting constellations of material life, Adorno further charged(anticipating, in effect,Bourdieu's recent studies of "cultural capital") : "If cultural criticism...sides with conservatism, it is because of its unconscious adherence to a notion of culture, which during the era of late capitalism, aims at a form of property which is stable and independent of stock-market fluctuations."[8] Without wanting to theoretically collapse mental into manual labor (as did Brecht in his "production aesthetics"), or to deny the invaluable critical and utopian moments in artis tic works, Adorno refused, then, to isolate cultural life as a higher pursuit, the premise upon which conservatives become alarmed at the extrinsic invasion of barbarous masses. Since it is often liberal pluralist who develop the Adorno-T. S. Eliot analogy, it is worth mentioning that their own approach to mass culture often makes it difficult to appreciate what the Frankfurt school figure was doing. When a separable category called "liesure activities" is isolated from questions of work and power, social scientists breathe new life into consolatory approaches to cultural life and are in an unfavorable position to understand Adorno's strictures upon the material *sources* of mass-cultural reception – for example, in boring, exhausting and powerless labor, which is ostensibly "compensated" by consumer purchasing power.

The analogy between the Frankfurt school and high culture conservatives includes the claim that both regard aesthetically cultivated

production as threatened in the twentieth century by the inroads of mass or "middle-brow" culture. Such a characterization fits the conservatives, no doubt. but its imputing of a hierarchical, binary opposition between "high" and "low" does little justice to the actual writings of the Frankfurt school on the relations between avant-garde modernist and mass culture in the era 1850-1940, that is during the "heroic" phase of adversarial modernism which the Frankfurt school did, in fact, champion. As Andreas Huyssen has written recently, for Adorno "modernism and mass culture have, ever since their simultaneous emergence in mid-nineteenth century, been engaged in a compulsive *pass de deux*."[9] Even if Adorno may have viewed the most valuable modernist works as those which embodied some resistance to a commodified and administered society (Schoenberg's and Kafka's art, for example), he saw most avant-garde activity, to say nothing of the contemporary functioning of earlier classical or romantic culture, as suffering from the degradation of art in consumer capitalism. One example would be his analysis of Wagner's contributions to the emerging culture industry. According to Adorno, Wagner's leitmotifs operate as advertisements, designed for the forgetful to be remembered, instead of servfng as constituents of true musical development.[10] (That Adorno's basis of critisim is an invidious contrast with the earlier Viennese art of motific development shows, it is quite true, that there is an aesthetic standard operating here, although it is an ultimately cognitive one. Beethoven had .he historical good fortune to live when a self-constituting subjectivity was possible, the age of bourgeois revolution.)[11] Adorno further argued that such phantasmagoric tableaux as the Venusberg or Magic Fire music "assumes the character of wares on display."[12]

It was not democracy, the masses, or so-called "mass culture" which, according to Adorno, posed the threat to high culture, the danger was posed, instead, by the reduction of virtually *all* cultural life to exchange value or the effects upon art of the return of a repressed and now brutalized nature in an instrumentally rationalised industrial society. "Thus the lack of breadth and generosity which is so striking in Adorno's canon of modernism," Huyssen has written. "is not simple the result of personal, 'elitest' taste. but it flows from his vigorous and relentless analysis of the cultural effects of commodification."

It is unnecessary here to catalogue all of the innumberable ways in which Adorno saw *both* modernist high culture and twentieth

century popular culture as driven by a logic of commodity fetichism, the cult of *nouveauté* (as a cover for mythic repetition and standardization), false immediacy (which camouflages the alienated world of an administered society), shock as a consumer good, sadomasochistic obeisance before repressive collectivities, etc. While it is quite true that Adorno viewed avant-grade as *more* autonomous than the direct products of the commercial culture industry, he found that art either readily usable by the latter (Wagner, Stravinsky, musical or pictorial impressionism, *art nouveau*, symbolist decadence, surrealism, *Neue Sachlichkeit*, neo-classicism etc.), or – and these were rare cases indeed—revealing in its formal structures a dialectical interplay between moments of emancipatory protest and the mirroring of contemporary forms of domination (Schoenberg, Karfa, Trakl, Beckett, etc.). As for the contemporary performance and reception of high culture, Adorno was unsparing in his attacks upon the regression of musical listening and the fetichizing of musical material, for example, in the much heralded Toscanini radio broadcasts of the late 1930s.[14] In sum, then, it mny be said that Adorno drew a line not so much between an alleged high and a debased mass culture as *within* high culture itself, but even here it was by no means an impermeable boundary.

One of the problems of the Adorno-conservative elitest analogy is that it fails to grasp the political implications of sharply diverging aesthetic postures. It rests, in fact, upon a highly abstract and even reified notion of "high culture." For one thing, there is often a failure to distinguish between "official" culture. say, the monumentalist pseudo-classicism of Wilhelmian Germany, and the multiplicities of genuinely high-cultural activity. Within the latter, and especially germane to the question at hand, Adorno's specific aesthetic and historical judgments are nor taken into account and he is simply assimilated to more traditionalist readings of the crisis of modern culture. Unlike Arnold, Eliot or Ortega, Adorno did not see embattled cultural elites struggling to preserve continuity with classical tradition, a posture which underpinned fears of rupture and anarchic "chaos" brought on by rising massess, instead he saw that rupture as a result of social processes of capitalist rationalization which a few selected modernist works managed to defy, while at the same time they also reflected its domination. Instead of images of classical wholeness and beauty—whose untroubled appearance in the twentieth century Adorno regarded as an affront to the experience of all human beings in this age, not merely

any elites—Adorno's modernist aesthetic selected out works of anguished expressionist protest and astrongent dissonance which, he felt, alone lived up to the cognitive—histirical demands made upon art. Anyone who has read Adorno's discussion of Schoenberg's wrenching "The Survivor of Warsaw" (1944)[15] for example, will understand a major reason why Adorno concerned himself so much with aesthetic: not because something called "culture" must survive, if by that we understand a myopic "sweetness and llght," or "organic harmony", but to register the deeper experiences of ordinary human beings in the process of their degradations. Critics of high-cultural 'elitism" would do well to understand the plebian value in such contestatory notions of art.[16]

For Adorno the division between the best modernist works and those of the entertainment industry should neither be ossified into eternally separate, "taste cultures,[17] or evaded by a harmonizing logic which obscured continuing social and cultural conflicts and injustices. "Both Schoenberg and the Hollywood film," he wrote to Walter Benjamin, "are torn halves of an integral freedom to which however they do not add up. It would be romantic to sacrifice ond to the other."[18]

The Frankfurt school's critique of the culture industry drew often upon the Institute's studies of the social psychology of contemporary' "administered capitalist"society. This need not be discussed here at length. What needs to be said, however, is that instead of objecting to assaults on hierarchical authority – as when cocservatives are alarmed at the decline of deference and the "rise of tne masses," from Burke to Eliot and Ortega – Adorno and his colleagues were troubled over sado-masochistic *submission* to authority in present society. This is how they adapted Freudian arguments for largely democratic ends. However much one may rightfully object to Adorno's attacks on jazz, they are aimed not at the art's rebellious "freedoms," which Adarno regarded hs spurious' but its ostensibly regressive froms of authoritarian compliance, which revealed the masochistic frailty of contemporary egos.

After returning to Germany in the 1950s, once he had gained a greater appreciation for formal democratic institutions in the United States,[19] Adorno wrote : " outrage at the alleged mass era has become an article for mass consumption, for inciting masses against politically democratic forms."[20] Connecting such tendencies with aesthetic questions, he commented ; "Ever since Baudelaire's day, aesthetic nobility has made

common cause with political conservatism, as though democracy, per se, the quantitative notion of a mass, rather than the continued repression in democracy were to blame for vulgarity."[21] Thus when Adorno and his associates read politically conservative thinkers such as Nietzsche or Spengler, they did not "consume" them in the manner of reception which the "culture-industry" model ascribed to average film-goers or music-listeners, they played tricks with elitest thinkers "using" their writings for their own purposes, just as, we have been told by current reception analysts, all readers, viewers and listeners do.

Apart from the charge of anti-democratic elitism, the Frankfurt school's views of mass culture have been often compared, as we have seen, to the puritan asceticism of conservative moralists. Here once, again, there is some point to the claim, but it becomes a very thin one indeed once we pass beyond surface appearances, The following key passage show the eudaemonist, if not hedonist, bases of Adorno's and Horkheimer's defence of artistic sublimations as against the frustration of desire in contemporary popular entertainments : "The culture industry perpetually cheats its consumers of what it perpetually promises. The promissory note which...it draws on pleasure is endlessly prolonged...The secret of aesthetic sublimation is its representation of fulfillment as a broken promise. The culture industry does not sublimate, it represses... Works of art are ascetic and unashamed, the culture industry is pornographic and prudish "[22] It is significant that the drawing some inspiration from Nietzsche's writings it was the latter's path-breaking assaults upon masochistic asceticism in mass culture which the Frankfurt school admired, but not his radical-aristocratic readings of the situation.

The purposeful purposelessness of art; its potential as a source of resistance to draconian utility, Adorno liked to compare to forms of entertainment, such as the circus, which have survived form the early industrial era. "The much maligned circus, act is repeated at the highest level of form where art seems poised to overcome the force of gravity. Similarly, the glaring absurdity of the circus – why waste all the energy ?— is actually the absurdity of art itself, more precisely of its enigmatic quality."[23] But the value of such "light art," in contrast with present "distractions ' is that by making a mockery of seriousness it revealed the social divisions and tainted social premises of "serious art." "The division itself is the truth." he wrote, "it does at least express the negetivity of the

culture which the different spheres constitute. Least of all can the antithesis be reconciled by absorbing light into serious art, or vice versa. But that is what the culture industry attempts. The eccentricity of the circus, peepshow and brothel is as embarrassing to it as that of Schoenberg and Karl Kraus."[24] Far from regarding most products of the culture industry as "escapist," a common, often puritan (or at least harshly utilitarian) charge, Adorno argued that they are not escapist enough ; they reinforce the governing performance principle of a society geared to alienated production. "Escape in earnest," he wrote in typical dialectial fashion, "could become a message just because of its unbending asceticism towards practical proposals."[25]

One of the key differences between Adorno's treatment of pleasure and that of conservative, or any other kind of puritans, is that his critique of mass-cultural "distractions" was rooted in a well-placed concern for the effects of debilitating *labour* upon the quality of leisure activities, an issue that is all too often neglected in writings on the subject. It is here above all, perhaps, that the Frankfurt school distinguished itself from moralist critics and pluralist defenders of mass "leisure." While real pleasure in cultural activity requires concentration and effort, the work process is usually so enervating,tedious and exhausting that such capacities are drained. What results is that although "people want to have fun," they want relief from both boredom and effort simultaneously," making it impossible to break out of the cycle of frustration.[26] "Pleasure hardens into boredom because, if it is to remain pleasure, it must not demand any effort and therefore moves rigorously in the worn grooves of association."[27] Instead of attacking allegedly "escapist" entertainment then, Adorno was arguing that "distraction is bound to the present mode of production, to the rationalized and mechanized process of labor to which, directly or indirectly, masses are subject."[28]

Adorno's attack on the degradation of labor in industrial societies conveniently leads us to the third major point of comparison which is often made between the Frankfurt school and conservative critics of mass culture : that both share a regressive nostalgia for pre-industrial; hierarchically organized, communities or for nineteenth-century, aesthetically cultivated, forms of bourgeois individualism. Here once again it is easy to see why such charges are frequently made. Adorno and Horkheimer, especially, were given to making invidious contrasts between current forms

of pseudo-individuated, but repressively collective culture and the relative "autonomy" of the bourgeois "subject" in the nineteenth-century liberal phase of industrial capitalism. All the same, the latter was not actually being used as a model in terms of which recommended cultural and social changes were being advanced. Such contrasts were more on the order of polemical devices intended to undermine evolutionary-progressive notions of linear improvement. Adorno and Horkheimer never failed to emphasize the class injustices upon which the aesthetic and psychological forms of an earlier bourgeois "subjectivity" rested, and the utopian moments they found in authentic art looked forward to an historically unprecedented society beyond economic anxieties and class exploitation. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the two philosophers wrote : "The task to be accomplished is not the conservation of the past, but the redemption of the hopes of the past."[29] As for alleged nostalgia concerning pre-industrial folk culture, this is a singularly misplaced criticism. Adorno and Horkheimer frequently argued that all attempts to appeal to ostensibly lively folk collectives were unrealistic, given their advanced state of liquidation by an homogenizing culture industry. Moreover, the two thinkers emphasized the material scarcities and social deminations upon which pre-industrial *Gemeinschaft* was based. "That there is no longer a folk does not mean,...as the Romantics propagated, that the masses are worse," Adorno wrote. "Rather it is precisely in the new, radically alienated form of society that the untruth of the old is first being revealed."[30]

Admittedly, the issue of industry and mechanical forms of cultural reproduction (press, film, etc.) cannot be so easily disposed of. Although one can readily find passages in which Adorno and Horkheimer viewed the power which technology seems to hold over contemporary society as resulting from "the power of those whose economic hold over society is greatest,"[31] much of their writing contains an almost ontological critique of industrial technology as such, "whose integrating tendencies," Adorno wrote, "are a constant invitation for false poetic paeans and lyrical peace—making with an agonal world."[32] Often Adorno spoke of radio or cinema as *intrinsically* serving the purposes of social domination and cultural debasement, pre-occupied as he was with Nazi uses of such instruments.[33]

The theoretical framework of such hypostatizing was the critique of instrumental rationality in which the "culture-industry" analysis

was conceived. For this critique tended to obscure historically specific social relations of technology beneath the enormous weight of the "domination of nature" category. It is significant that in defending avant-grade art against technically reproduced "mass" entertainment, Adorno privileged the development of aesthetic *technique* over any use that might be made of machine *technology*.[34] All the same, these tendencies were less regressive than they might appear. While a more flexible approach to questions of mechanical reproduction was undoubtedly needed, Adorno and Horkheimer were not attacking what is often called "progress" so much as the return of a mythic, brutalized nature through the very workings of advanced industrial society. The problem was not modernity but *modern* barbarism, the return of the repressed *within* the functionally ascetic culcture and society made by technical progress.

The charge of regressive nostalgia, it is worth pointing out, has usually been made from within a more-or-less-explicit "modernization" theory in which the romantic caricature of a creative, communal folk is countered through an equally caricatured image of the pre-industrial past. In Edward Shils' influential 1957 attck on the Frankfurt school, for example, in which the various charges we are analyzing were first brought together, a picture of dignified modern consumer choice is contrasted with an image of early modern lower-class culture as one, simply, of "bear-baiting, cock-fighting, drunkenness, tales of witches, gossip about the sexual malpractices of priests, monks and nuns, stories of murders and mutilations."[35] While being well aware of the often degrading material and social conditions in which peasants, artisans and early industrial workers lived, contemporary historians of popular culture have begun to rescue these groups from such forms of whiggish historical condescension.[36]

The charge of regressive nostalgia, then, is almost as riddled with problems as are those of "asceticism" and "elitism." Clearly, in the American 1950s, when the conservative analogy was first developed, the Frankfurt schools' writings were not widely know and the complex arguments of Adorno and his Institute colleagues were often assimilated to the more influential and easier to follow attacks on mass culture of Dwight Mcdonald and Clement Greenberg. Here, perhaps, there was some real substance to the left-right analogy,

except that Greenberg's and Mcdonald's previously Trotskyist politics were abandoned before, or in the course of, their polemics against mass culture. Greenberg, for example, saw kitsch art, and not its functions within a commodity society, as the major threat to an otherwise thriving high culture; unlike Adorno, who never tired of attacking the frustrations and merely pseudosatisfactions of culture-industry audiences, Greenberg viewed kitsch as fatally attractive and satisfying to the aesthetically untutored masses.[37] On the other hand, given Greenberg's influential espousal of post-war New York abstract expressionism, it is significant that Adorno (in his relentless search for commodity fetichism within high culture) regarded the "non-representational" as "perfectly compatible with the ideas affluent members of society have about decorating their walls."[38] As for Mcdonald, after abandoning the elements of social radicalism in his first, 1944, version of the "theory of popular culture," his later essays on the subject were often hard to distinguish from the writings of Eliot or Ortega, for they included mass-*society* perspectives, cultural nostalgia for stratified folk-elite communities, and attacks upon mass culture as if it were a direct product of a democratic order.[39]

This contrst between Adorno on the one hand, and Greenberg and Mcdonald on the other, suggests the inadequacy of an often-made claim: that mid-century critics of mass culture were deploying cultural criticism of the middle classes to compensate for their own political de-radicalization. This interpretive strategy is central, for example, to Richard Pells' chapter on the subject in his recent *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age*.[40] As we have seen, the Frankfurt school was still very much on the political left in the 1940s and early 1950s, whatever revisions it may have made in Marx's work. Although it did not pursue detailed studies of the political economy of the culture industry, Adorno and his colleagues still held the view that class divisions and injustices were quite alive in spite of the attenuations of working-class consciousness. Mass culture, in short, helped to camouflage, but did not eliminate, class society. (The same view could also be found in the circle around *Dissent* after 1954.) Greenberg and Mcdonald, on the other hand, were comparable to conservative *mass-society* theorists. But there is another important problem in Pells' argument. Defining political or economic criticism very narrowly,

basically in terms of the classic concerns of the American old left of the 1930s, Pells often slights the political weight of new forms of "cultural" criticism developing in mid century consumer society, such as those Which cited middle-class conformity or frustrations with climbing the proverbial ladder, or the pacifying functions of the entertainment industry. Though in some cases this "cultural" turn might substitute for political-economic criticism (as in Mcdonald's and Greenberg's work), it often valuably extended what had been an overly narrow concept of politics.

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Once the writings of the Frankfurt school are disentangled from those of elitest conservatives, or culturally despairing ex-leftists, it is easier to develop more theoretically adequate and more historicallyfocussed readings of the mass culture debate in this century. In the second half of this article I should like to offer a new way of approaching the matter. Instead of tracing the development of the debate within one political perspective, say western Marxism, or, more commonly, structuring the narrative around shared general approval or disapproval of "mass culture," as in the right-left "elitest" analogy, it might be more revealing to construct pairings based on shared historical space and perceptions of contemporary life. Adorno and his "pluralist" critics, for example, develop similar diagnostic premises concerning how the "masses" are absorbed, neutralized or otherwise domesticated in capitalist democracies, however they may differ concerning the political and cultural evaluation of such putative trends. Having unravelled some of the Adorno-Eliot weavings, it might be heuristically valuable to see what connections existed in the mid-twentieth century between the Frankfurt school and its liberal adversaries. What I propose, then, is to situate contending schools of thought on the question of mass culture in the same contentious bed, as *rival contemporaneous versions* of a shared discourse on the political and cultural state of the "masses. In doing so it may well be possible not only to understand better the common historical pressures which make for "strange bedfellows," but to evaluate more adequately than in other procedures the intellectuals' own historically conditioned "politics of the mass culture."

The mid-century discourse on "domesticated masses" was preceeded by a long history of lament concerning, or hope for, a "rise of the masses," This is a familiar topic and was, of course, a staple of

modern political and cultural though from Burke and Paine to the 1930s. I want here merely to suggest the state of this long-standing perception in the inter-war discussion of mass culture. For discourse on the "rise of the masses." thrived in the year 1918-35, following upon the Bolshevik revolution and the severe blows to aristocratic economic and political power brought on by World War One; seeing the expansion of radical mass movements in the great depression; and, at the same time, experiencing an enormous extension of mass communications such as the press, cinema and radio. Fevered discussion of the "age of the masses," and the inter-related political and cultural effects of the "machine," was now far more widespeard than in the decades before the war, with the added expectation that the key to the future lay in either, or both, American or Soviet civilization. In this historical conjuncture, conservative and left-wing evaluations of growing popular sovereignty were rival assessments of a commonly held diagnosis. Selecting out some of the most influential (at least in the long run) theories of mass culture from the inter-war years, it is worth briefly discussing what Ortega, Eliot and Leavis shared with their political opponents and German contemporaries, Brecht and Benjamin.

Ortega Y Gasset's *The Revolt of* the *Masses* was well named, for in this familiar jeremiad the patrician alarmist tirelessly condemned the alleged "accession of the masses to complete social power."[41] The average man, in Ortega's view, was fast becoming a barbarian who "imposes his opinions" and refuses to defer to his intellectual superiors in matters of cultural taste.[42] "The mass," Ortega wrote, "crushes beneath it everything that is different, everything that is excellent individual, qualified and select."[43] Such rebellious indocility in the age of mass-democracy took the form either of widespread refusals to submit to direction of any kind, or fanatical and violent support of Bolshevik or fascist tyrannies headed by mediocrities who show no respect for the worthy traditions of civilization.[44] Modern political dictatorship was pictured as a manipulative mass-state which resulted from the discarding of rational patrician elites. Mob rule and manipulation in culture and politics were not opposites but related features of the rise of the masses.

T. S. Eliot's writings on culture were similar to Ortega's except for their defense of a Christian-centered and highly stratified, essentially aristocratic society. Eliot enveighed against the lowering of standards which resulted from attempting to educate the middle classes

and the masses. Such misguided egalitarian assaults upon cultural life were said to be "destroying our ancient edifices to make ready the grcund upon which the barbarian nomads of the future will encamp in their mechanical caravans."[46] Somewhat more ambiguous and perhaps more influential than Eliot's position, was that of F.R. Leavis, who had an enormous impact for four decades on teachers and critics of English literature. One can read Leavis's writings of the 1930s on cultural decline as either an attack upon machine civilization; the domination of business values or the spread of a "levelled-down" education and literacy,[46] What perhaps was most alarming to Leavis was the rise of a newly expanded, poorly trained, and mediocre journalist intelligentsia, whose writings were gobbled up by metropolitan masses, and, in a kind of cultural "Gresham's law," who were marginalizing the proper arbiters of aesthetic judgement.[47] Although the critic's "creative minority" was more a professional strata than a social class (as in Eliot's case), and there were significant ambiguities in Leavis's critiques, there is no denying the generally elitest, ascetic and regressive tenor of his thought on mass culture.

In the German Weimar Republic of 1918-33 there was an enormous amount written by professors, imaginative writers and journalists which resembled these conservative theses. The ideas of Nietzsche, Le Bon and Spengler resonated widely and were given particular urgency by the impact of American mass culture in the German 1920s, the threats to academic mandarin and aristocratic power posed by a new parliamentary democracy with strong trade union support, and the existence of Europe's largest Soviet-inspired communist movement. But the more permanently influential response to mass culture which developed out of the Weimar Republic came from the left : first, in the period 1924-36, in the optimistic "production aesthetics" of numerous left-liberal and Marxist figures of whom the most important are Brecht's and Benjamin's which included hopes for a new mass culture based upon democratically-controlled technical media; and the deeply pessimistic writing on mass culture by Adorno and Horkheimer during their American exile, 1938-1950.

Whereas the term "masses" is more commonly associated with conservative or patrician liberal alarm,[48] the word had since the late-nineteenth century been increasingly adopted by socialists in a positive sense to describe the collective agent which was expected to bring a new

political and cultural millenium, namely the industrial proletariat. Brecht and especially Benjamin could no longer be so sure, and yet the former, despite his Leninist politics, never forswore his trust in the capacity of the massess to completely re-make cultural life, and the latter strongly entertained such notions at least until 1936. Brecht and Benjamin favored the "revolt of the massess," unlike conservatives, but they shared with their adversaries a sense of the immense threat to the traditional culture of *Bildung und Besitz*, as well as to aristocratic and bourgeois power, posed by popular insurgencies, even though they were also well aware that fascists might outdo communists in mobilizing them.

Hoping to counter the pacifying effects of bourgeois ethics, Brecht tried in his plays to denaturalize what he saw as the economic effects of capitalist society so as to galvanize his audiences into political action. Where conservatives bemoaned the decline of deference and the fragility in the 1920s and 30s of the traditional social and cultural order, Brecht, agreeing with their perceptions of the situation, sought to revive the carnivalesque culture of plebian insubordination in order to further the process of lower-class emancipation. Further, inspired by Russian constructivism and American mass culture, he sought to channel the demystifying potentials of the new mass media in an anti-authoritarian direction. Radio, he contended, for example, could be made the vehicle of a multi-centered questioning of the authorities,[49] a forum for what Russell Berman has recently called, in a study of the Weimar left modernists, a "vocalisation of the collective."[50] Differing strongly with conservatives' evaluation of the "rise of the masses,"yet sharing scenarious of change with his traditionalist rivals, Brecht wrote : "The way of out...is shown by the rising class. There is no way back. It's a matter not of the good old, but the bad new. Not the dismantling of technology, but its build-up. Man won't be man again by leaving rhe masses, but as he goes into them. The masses overthrow their dehumanization, and with that man becomes human again (but not as he was earlier)..."[51]

Walter Benjamin, as is well known. was less sanguine than Brecht, and quite ambivalent about the decline of traditional "aura" when works of art are made in the current age of mechanical reproduction. Yet, when developing the more Brechtian side of his multiple tendencies, Benjamin claimed not merely that revolutionary political and cultural

possibilities flowed from media such as cinema and the press, but he also extolled the aesthetic effects of the "rise of the masses." This side of his analysis is often missed in the much-discussed "Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" essay.

Instead of developing a unicausal technological view of cultural change, as is often alleged, Benjamin consistently inter-related the historical emergence of the masses since the mid-nineteenth century with the development, use and perceptual changes brought about by new means of cultural reproduction. In his initial discussion of the decline of aura attendant upon multiple reproducability of artworks, Benjamin speaks quite clearly of film--the central subject of the essay--as a "powerful agent" of "contemporary mass movements," and later emphasizes how photography emerged "simultaneously with the rise of socialism." In the aesthetic and political desacralizing of the art object in the modern age, new mass media work in tandem with the "desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly, which is just as ardent as their bent toward overcoming the uniqueness of every reality by accepting its reproduction... To pry an object from its shell, to destroy its aura, is the mark of a perception whose 'sense of the universal equality of things' has increased to such a degree that it extracts it even from a unique object by means of reproduction."

This championing of an "eclipse of distance," one of the features of contemporary life which has deeply worried many diverse critics of mass culture from Nietzsche and Leavis to Adorno and Daniel Bell, is quite central to much of Benjamin's aesthetics. The unmediated juxtapostions of his historical essays, whose montage effects Adorno criticized as undialectiacal, as well as his surrealist-inspired hopes for the integration of art and life--evident in Benjamin's interweavings of politics and aesthetics--drew their historical meaning from a perception of contemporary masses as desirous of bringing things "'closer' spatially and humanly." Benjamin wrote enthusiastically that everyone can now be part of a work of art, for with the growing ascendancy of the masses and the spread of new media the distance between author and public radically declines. Citing experiments of newspaper reporting by Soviet workers on their daily labor, Benjamin welcomed here the expanded definition of literature which this might entail. "Literary license is now founded on polytechnic rather than

specialized training and thus becomes common property." Another from of the "eclipse of distance" Benjamin claimed to find was that traditional behaviour toward works of art was eroding in a way which helped to further empower contemporary masses who are able now 'to organize and control themselves in their reception." Instead of being absorbed by it, as in private concentration before a painting, today's "distracted" mass absorbs the cinematic artwork. Under the guidance of tactile appropriation in a distracted state of mind, critical and receptive functions are combined, facilitating the "democratization of expertise."[52]

Obviously this ingenious but wildly over-optimistic eassay is open to many objections, some of which Adorno made in his often described criticisms.[53] It was especially vulnerable to attack by the 1936 date of its composition, after the Soviet and American sources of Benjamin's optimism, drawn from the 1920s, were gone in the age of Stalin and Disney; at the same time, the equally evident Nazi uses of mechanical reproduction and mobilized masses only partly disturbed the bouyant tenor of the piece, and these disturbances were relegated to concluding suggestions (now, of course, well known) concerning fascist "aestheticization of politics." Clearly the mid-1930s saw mounting historical pressures on the "rise of the masses" historical paradigm, even though it continued to appear in increasingly dated conservative and orthodox Marxist writings. Whatever else one might say about the word or reality of "masses," it was becoming more dubious to suggest that the human beings referred to here were acceding, or would be soon able to accede, to "complete social power." The time was ripe, especially after the emergence of seemingly consensual, welfare-state consumer societies after 1945 for a new historical diagnosis and mass-culture analysis. This was the "moment" of Adorno and Horkheimer, but also of their "pluralist" critics, Lazarsfeld, Shils and Riesman.

The "new" historical constellations of the 1940s and the 1950s had not, of course, appeared all at once. But whereas hyper-nationalist appeals had mobilized masses since the late nineteenth century for radical conservative and then fascist causes, after World War Two European conservative politics made its peace with parliamentary democracy and an accomodating organized labor movement; if peasants, lower middle classes and non-socialist workers voted right, it was for a

"modernized" and tamed version of conservatism. In addition, while the sources of a truly mass-production consumer society lay again in the late nineteenth century, and the 1920s was a major period of its expansion, depression and war had intervened: it was only in the two decades after 1945 that the promises of high-mass consumption (at least for about two-thirds of the population) was to materialize, aided by a Keynesian consensus among business, trade-union and government leaders in favor of an administered or managed capitalism.[54]

The mid century discourse of "domesticated masses" was stronger, however, in the United States than in western Europe. Althogh the new framework was also developing in post-war Europe, traditional aristocratic and conservative alarm at cultural democracy was still alive there, and Marxist pratisans of a militant working-class culture were also in evidence, at least in France, England and Italy On the other hand, the historical weaknesses of "feudal" and "proletarian" cultural traditions are often noted by students of American exceptionalism. In the Uniten States, intellectual conservatism had also traditionally included political and cultural suspicion of "masses," but this did not preclude support of parliamentary government, meritocratic laws and growth-oriented capitalism.[55] The liberal-conservative economic and political harmonies of post-war America were facilitated by such historical tendencies, as well as by mid-century liberal concern for smooth-functioning political stability and efficient technocratic policies. Perhaps even more important, the deep sources and contemporary reality of a stabilized, prosperous consumer society (with an enormous, internationally extended "culture industry") were greater in the United States in the post-war decades. When we add the lack of an independent labor politics and the bipartisan, anti-communist fervor of the cold war-and the general rallying around traditional nativistvalues - it is not surprising that it was in mid-century United States that rival accounts of the containment of radical change, happily consuming and depoliticized publics and a functionally conservative popular culture were most fully articulated,

When seen in this light, the American discussion of mass culture in the 1940s and 1950s looks less like an all-but-uniform picture of alienated intellectuals defending an allegedly embattled high culture

as it is often depicted-than an encounter between contending evaluations of what was understandably (if too monolithically) seen as a depoliticized consumer society. What was new and historically significant about the American discussion was not feverish concern by intellectuals about mass culture, and not even the appearance of culturally-focused alarm by ex-leftists like Dwight Mcdonald or Clement Greenberg, whose analyses were pallid and undistinguished when compared to Frankfurt school accounts. The significance of writings in mid-century America on mass culture is that a new, left critique was rivalled by a new, conservatively-oriented, liberal defense of it, and that both shared a diagnostic paradigm against which much of the subsequent discussion of mass culture has had to react. How, then, were masses domesticated in Frankfurt school and liberal-pluralist discourse?

Ever since the mid-1930s Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse had been arguing that the working class was largely integrated in administered capitalist societies. Instead of class insurgency amid the perception of injustice, the contemporary world produced ego-weak, debased and submissive psyches in its consumer citizens, whose complaint behavior toward inter-locking administrative and economic powers was anchored by such ideological reinforcements as the products of the pseudo-democratic culture industry. Occasionally, Adorno or Horkheimer suggested that the manipulation of consciousness was not complete,[56] but the thrust of their arguments appeared to make it virtually so. This was not the kind of "manipulation" which frightened "crowd" psychologists and conservative critics of Caesarian democracy from De Tocqueville and Le Bon to Ortega. In this manipulation it was not any growing ascendancy of the masses which eventuated in tyranny; it was new psychological and cultural forms of elite control which forestalled collective desires for real, structural change. Instead of the masses who are explicitly threatening in Ortega's scenario or implicitly so in Leavis's fear of expanded literacy and resultant pandering to the least common denominator, we have a picture of manipulated *and* pacified consumers.

The culture-industry model is vulnerable to a wide variety of criticisms and not merely those we examined earlier. David Held has wrttten, for example, that the Frankfurt school maintained "an

exaggerated notion of the cohesion of capitalism"; society appears in its writings" as steered from above rather than as the outcome...of a continuous struggle over rules and resources." At the same time, "a homology is often assumed, quite unjustifiably, between the form and content of the culture industry and the acutal consciousness of working people."[57] One could also argue that it is pragmatic considerations, and not ideological "false consciousness," which most often makes powerless or relatively powerless people conform to the rules, especially if such behavior leads to immediate, tangible benefits.Such criticisms are, in fact, far more compelling and just than those of elitism, puritanism and historical nostalgia. But whatever its inadequacies, the culture industry theory needs to be seen as an embittered left response to a situation which was shared by the earliest of its critics, the various groups of liberal pluralists whose relation to Adorno's historical premises need now to be explored.

The first group, which influenced all others on the subject of mass culture, were behaviorist audience-researchers headed by Paul Lazarsfeld, with whom Adorno had unsuccessfully tried to work in the late 1930s. From this quarter come attacks upon the "hyperdemic needle" approach to mass media, which Adorno and Horkheimer seemed to share with early media sociologists in the 1930s--the view that values, choices and the like were introjected into the audience by manipulating press, radio programs and advertisements. Lazarsfeld and others showed that audiences received messages through a "two-step-flow" in which local opinion leaders, or social groups to which an individual reader or listener was attached, mediated the reception of press or radio content. They further demonstrated that the precise choice of products or political candidates was little influenced by media messages. Yet the first point, however true it might be, failed to show how consumers were any more powerful as a result of such mediated responses, especially as the receiver was approached as a "chooser" of goods which had been made because they were profitable to its manufacturers; such consumers might not be able, for example, to "choose" neighborhood public parks or good and inexpensive mass transit, housing or health care. (At the same time, it is quite true that "two-step-flow" research effectively damaged mass society theories which suggested the disappearance of "intermediate groups" in an atomized, homogeneous world). As for the second point, the concept of media impact was conceived in so circumscribed and behaviorist a manner-as an isolable "choice" of this or that particular consumer good, whether

it be for brand x or y, or political candidate x or y – as to preclude from the start addressing harder questions. Neither the researchers or their corporate or government sponsers were interested in learning about the possible role of mass media in social control and containment and as a means through which established structures of economic and political power were perpetuated.[59] "How was one to find hard data for *that*?" would be the predictable response to such criticisms. Occasionally, Lazarsfeld made critical comments like the following, though not in his large and influential empirical studies :"Mass communications may be inadvertently trnnsforming the energies of men from active participation into passive knowledge."[60] Nevertheless, the burden of his research findings suggested that the United States was a highly stabile society of diverse and healthily competing social groups and institutions in which mass communications exerted only minimal influence over public opinion.

On the face of it this benign vision would seem to be light years away from that of Adorno and his colleagues. But what separated the two accounts was less their descriptive treatments of mass media and audience response than what Adorno critically added and Lazarsfeld did not : a focus on questions of power and of hegemonic ideologies, broadly conceived. The diagnostic paradigms, though not the political valences, strongly overr-lapped. Adorno saw mass-culture consumers as reduced to Pavlovian twitches,[61] while the notion of introjected "false needs" did little to counter a behaviorist approach to human actions.[62] Even if this was for Adorno a woeful substantive reality and not, as it was for Lazarsfeld a methodological requirement, the descriptive similarity remains.

Adorno and Lazarsfeld were, in addition, far closer on the effects of the media than is often supposed.When Lazarsfeld didaddress the question of media impact on basic audience,attitudes.he emphasized that its power to change consciousness was very limited and that the press or radio usually "only" reinforced pre-existing values, beliefs, etc.[63] But this is how the Frankfurt school viewed ideology as transmitted through the culture industry, as an anchoring of mental structures which were introjected by the social totality as a whole; they did not look at the media as an isolable malevolent force. If interpreted as ideological reinforcement, then, the effect imputed to the media is not so minimal. As for Lazarsfeld's findings on the limited impact of the media on consumer product choice, it is worth pointing out that the whole purpose of such research, from the

point of view of its corporate sponsors, was to determine existing obstacles to the penetration of advertising messages in the interest of countering such obstacles, and all in the name of "consumer sovereignty." Thus Lazarsfeld's conception of mass communications inquiry as market research dovetailed nicely with that of his financial backers.[64] As Daniel Czitron has written, Lazarsfeld argued to business groups that his analyses 'offered the most rational strategy...for improving the knowledge needed to forecast and control consumer behavior."[65]

Finally, the Frankfurt school and the media sociologists shared a tendency to explore mass media and its reception in isolation from their history. The Frankfurt school never studied the complex historical dynamics involved in the process of conversion to mass culture and the erosion of local, ethnic or class cultures, an inquiry which might have revealed some active agency (however mediated) in the lives of working people. Moreover, Adorno's and Horkheimer's analysis of the culture industry shared with Lazarsfeld's media research, as well as with pluralist descriptions of what Herbert Gans was to call "taste cultures,"[66] a failure to account for real changes in popular cultural form and content in the twentieth century.[67] Once again, the interpretations which led to this historical treatment differed widely. In the case of Lazarsfeld and the pluralists such disregard for history was part of a social-science tendency in the mid-century decades to universalize from the contemporary American present as part of a valorizing and stabilizing effort; the Frankfurt school, on the other hand, saw mythic repetition in culture-industry products as symptoms of a "modern archaic", functions of a pathological historical impasse in a seemingly unalterable "administered society." All the same the diagnoses similarly domesticated mid-century masses in depicting them as more pacified than they were—Adorno, for example, neglected critical elements in under-class consciouness, in black culture or in 1950s adolescent revolts—and in implying that forces of structural change in the population had been effectively stilled, thus justifying the treatment of contemporary life as an historically immobile, endless present.

Whatever connections existed between Adorno and Lazarsfeld it was with the architects of political and cultural pluralism rhat the Frankfurt thinkers were most clearly in intimate competition, both schools constructing rival accounts of an allegedly harmonious society governed by technocratic elites and strongly supported by functionally passive consumer "citizens." In the pluralist theories developed in the 1950s by American

social scientists such as Parsons, Shils. Bell, Lipset, Schlesinger, and Riesman, and European ones such as Aron, Dumazadier and Dahrendorf, "a pluralist social structure performs a dual function," as Peter Bachrach has described. "First, in keeping people absorbed in proximate concerns of everyday life , it minimizes their availability for mobilization by counter-elites; and, secondly' in performing this task, it greatly mitigates mass pressure and demands that would otherwise hobble the independence of elites essential to their maintaining the system."[68] Here, of course, was the social scientists' validation of what the Frankfurt school strenuously deplored. But both premised their arguments on the descriptive validity of this paradigm. Moreover, as both Frankfuit school and pluralist theory grew in response to the apparent mass appeals of fascism and Stalinism, or the supposed populist sources of McCarthyism, each was deeply suspicious of allegedly authoritarian proclivities of contemporary workers or lower middle classes, even though, of course, Adorno and his associates saw this as effected from above.[69] In the case of the pluralist, mass politics was explicitly attached. Their sanguine views rested on the assumption of continued goverance through "rational" bargaining among technically qualified, diverse elites, and the further growth of a healthy dose of political apathy on the part of the average citizen-consumer. Adorno and the associates, on the other hand, bitterly criticized such an administered society but also could not abide a politics which would be based on the activization of populations whom they deemed to have "false needs," and a craven love of authority. Thus both perspectives coalesced not only around a technocratic "end of ideology" description of contemporary rule, but contained a deep suspicion of collective action, however differently they evaluated the significance of these developments.

As for the specific tenor of mass culture theory amongst the pluralists, the first thing to be said is that they too rejected the term. though not in favor of the critical "culture industry," but the affirmative claims of cultural diversity and consumer choice, We need to distinguish, though, among three different groups of cutural pluralist writers :

1) *Mandarin optimists*, like Bernard Berleson, Edward Shils and Daniel Bell, who were quite hopeiul about the continued strength of high culture. which they sanitized and denuded of its contestatory elements. These pluralists pointed to the ostensible expansion of that culture in an economically abundant society able to educate well its ablest citizens and

provide them with cultivated entertainment through the mass media.[70] At the same time, they were patronizingly indulgent toward the "lesser" enjoyments of what Shils called "brutal" or "mediocre" culture, tending to softpedal their actual disdain for it by attacking those who ascetically denied the right of all people to fun, and regressively failed to note how much more brutal and mediocre pre-and early industrial culture was. For the mandarin optimists, cultural stratifications are eternal; there is only improvement *within*, say, "mediocre" culture. While retaining the notion of cultural levels, they stressed that what was different about contemporary capitalist democracies, in contrast to those ruled by selfperpetuating elites, is that in basing themselves upon legal equality and democratic suffrage they overcame the exclusion of lower social classes from the centers of power and opportunity; such societies, therefore, represent the first in history in which "the mass of the population has been incorporated *into* society."[71] Here, of course, differently stated, was the Frankfurt school's nightmare of the virtual invisibility of continued social contradictions and injustices; Adorno and Shils both stressed the cohesive integration of mid-twentieth century capitalist societies.

2) *Cultural Relativists*, such as Lyman Bryson, Russell Lynes, Riesman and later Herbert Gans, who saw merit in many diverse "leisure" activities while stressing the values of consumer choice for personal development.[72] Whereas Gans was to make this very clear, it is usually missed that Riesman's *Lonely Crowd* did not criticize the media or consumer culture when lamenting middle-class conformity (the notion of "other-directed" compliance was much influenced by Fromm's deradicalized version of his own earlier Frankfurt school thought).[73] Instead, he stressed the value of competent cultural choice amongst consumer goods and mass-media products as a source of resistance to group pressures (inverting the valuation of the "two-step flow" which media researchers had discovered), and as an alleged vehicle for developing individual autonomy. To this end, Riesman emphasized, professional "leisure counselors" might be needed. As a fine example of the domesticating rhetoric of pluralist cultural politics one finds the following central argument in *The Lonely Crowd*, one which anticipated the puerility of current consumerist jargon about easily exchangeable "lifestyles." "Surely the great mass-media artists....make an important contribution to autonomy. The entertainers....exert a constant pressure on the accepted peer-groups and suggest new modes of escape from them....the movies have multiplied the choices in styles of life and leisure

available to millions."[74] While Riesman and Adorno shared an abiding concern for individual autonomy, and there were many points of contact between their critiques of "other-directed" conformity and ego-weak dependencies, Adorno had nothing but scorn for such ideas of liberation *within* the present system of technocratic rule and commodity production.

3) *Aesthetic Populists* like Gilbert Seldes (In his hopeful moods), John Kouwenhoven or Reuel Denney, who were early developers of a formalist appreciation of many mass cultural products.[75] While some of this writing was a valuable anti-dote to the usual aesthetic snobbery of intellectuals, it too presented a pacified version of cultural life. Such critics isolated the forms of Hollywood films, popular music or literature from the matrices of economic and political power within which they were created and received. Theirs was a highly depoliticized analysis of the kind which later facilitated the adoption of Mcluhanite mass communications theory among executives in the advertising industry and in media conglomerates. Mcluhan's own aesthetic populism, it may be noted, drew upon his training as a formalist critic.[76]

It was from the pluralists—especially of the Shils and Bell variety—that the attacks upon the Frankfurt school as elitest, ascetic regressive often derived in the 1950s. Of course, we can now see that the elitest charge could at least as well be made against their own redefinitions of democracy in technocratic and consumerist terms as against Adorno's scathing critique of such hollowed versions of popular sovereignty. But instead of making counter charges I would prefer to see each group as contenders for the label of good democrats (despite my own particularly strong criticisms of the conservative liberals) at a time when older hierarchical and stratified notions of society no longer held away amongst most intellectuals. The same could be said about the "ascetic" label, for Shils and Adorno, as well as Riesman, each recognized the shift within capitalist society from a producer-work ro a hedonist-consumer culture. Although pluralists (apart from Daniel Bell) sought to validate this trend, while the Frankfurt school saw in it what Marcuse was to call "repressive desublimation," here too there was a mid-century rivalry: who is the real defender of pleasure now that ascetic values are discredited?

In different ways, then, Adorno, Lazarsfeld, Shils, Riesman and Denney each further domesticated relatively pacified consumer publics, exaggerating the consensual cohesiveness of mid-century industrial societies

while implying that the flow of history had stopped. In closing this re-interpretation of the mass-culture debate since 1920 we need to consider briefly what new paradigms have developed since the 1950s, both within the orbit of "culture industry" analyses and elsewhere. After the masses are loudly "ascending" or quietly "consuming," what do "they" (which also means "we") do then ?

Only a few comments can be made here about patterns in a vast body of writing on mass culture since the late 1950s. If we search again for discursive models extending across political and methodological divisions, perhaps what is most striking are the various ways in which earlier paradigms of "ascendant" or "domesticated" masses have been seriously questioned and a new focus upon mass culture as "contested terrain" has emerged. In a period where powerful, but not entireiy stabile, forms of technocratic and class rule *and* class, ethnic or gendered resistance movements seem to have settled down to protracted skirmishes, it is not surprising that mass culture is often seen, especially since the mid-1960s, as a force-field in which struggles over meaning contend. The first and most obvious development to mention here is the emergence of new social movements (racial and ethnic civil rights, students', womens', anti-war, etc. since the mid-1950s), and the forms of popular culture (critical, conformist, or both) which have followed in their wake. In addition, one could cite the trouble that have beset the Keynesian consensus since the mid-1960s, the decline of American international power, the enormous expansion of the university inteligentsia, and the weakening of adversarial modernist culture as each playing a role in recasting the discussion of mass culture away from the mid-century face-off we have analyzed between the left pessimists and conservative-liberal optimists.

Examples of "contested terrain" models may be found in new left writings within the British "cultural studies" movement or within debates around the "culture-industry" thesis which have raged since the mid-1960s. In Britain a neo-populist treament of workers as expressive, collective creators of their own culture life emerged in the 1960s, influenced by the work of Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams and E.P. Thompson, though after 1970 the emphasis shifted

toward systemic constraints (political, ideological, and linguistic) upon class, or other sub-culture, expression. Here the influence of Althusserian structuralism tempered earlier left-humanist assumptions and a mixture of compliant and resisting modes were now regularly found in forms of contemporary working-class and youth sub-cultures.[77]

In the recent history of the "culture-industry" model there have been determined searches for utopian or otherwise critical elements, and not just ideologically reinforcing ones, in mass culture; theorizing of working-class counter-public spheres; or perhaps most significant, a stress on how culture industry products give expression to, or help develop, legitimate, *real* (and not simply manipulated) needs in more-than-passive consumers, only to deflect, neutralize or frustrate them.[78] In the 1960s even Adorno himself extended somewhat the rare moments of hope contained in his earlier writings and suggested that there might well be gaps between the ideological intentions of, say, a film, and its actual effects, in part because the appeals may be internally inconsistent (consumerism, for example, raises the desire for real sensual pleasure) or theaudience's consciousness is not fully controlled.[79] (In the neoconservative reading of struggles within consumer capitalism the terms, of course, are reversed and it is the spread of "permissive he donist" culture which threatens an otherwise efficient and morally restraining productive economy, as in Deniel Bell's *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism.*)

Of course the cultural present need not be seen as explicitly contentious, and films, press, books or music have been interpreted, in less political but analogous fashion, as points of intersection in which the purposes, experiences or sign-systems of "producers" and "consumers" criss-cross and deflect each other, but in which meanings are not fixed but said to be endlessly disseminated or deferred. In this interpretive situation the very dichotomies between high and popular culture or production and consumption have been called into serious question, in part because of a desire to undercut any privileging of the first terms in these binary oppositions, but also because such dichotomies obscure the complexities of active re-use and re-definition of materials wich are said to characterize popular "consumption." While mid-century liberal political and cultural

theory has been forcefully criticized by neo-Marxist, feminist, readerreception, semiological, post-structuralist and neo-conservative writings, to mention a few of the most influential currents since the mid-1960s, important aspects of pluralist work have been widely (if variously.) absorbed, especially the stress upon differential and group-mediated reception of mass-cultural products.

The 1960s saw revitalized and differentiated blocks within the "masses" (the word itself lost favor, not surprisingly) who in becoming politically and culturally assertive blacks, student activists, ethnics, workers or women helped to undermine the rhetoric of domestication, without, bowever (except in the most naive responses) bringing back that of imminent revolution. Since then culturally-focussed academics in sociology, anthropology and history, as well as literary critics—many of whom came of age in the 1960s—have been re-thinking how people (whether modern or not) actually process and re-define cultural goods in the act of "reception." While established authority is pictured neither as fragile as Ortega or Brecht perceived, or as uncontested as Shils or Adorno viewed it, audiences who "read" political and cultural messages, or process aesthetic forms, are now seen to be just as manipulative as the authorities are in producing them.[80] Perhaps such new claims of "user" power have been exaggerated, even if it is relatively modest "tricks" and "games" which readers, viewers and listeners are said to play on the continuing dominant modes, and not the gathering of forces for collectively "seizing" centralized authority. Be that as it may, it is possible to see the crystallizing of a new diagnostic paradigm in the history of the mass-culture debate-beyond those of Eliot and Brecht on the one hand, and Shils and Adorno on the other—when Michel De Certeau writes in 1980: "Everyday life invents itself by *poaching* in countless ways on the property of others ... To rationalized, expansionist and at the same time centralized, clamorous, and spectacular production corresponds *another* production, called 'consumption'. The latter is devious, it is dispersed, but it insinuates itself everywhere, silently and almost invisibly, because it does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its *ways of using* products imposed by a dominant economic order."[81]

Notes and References

1. See Martin Jay, *The Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1973), ch. 6; Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), chs. 9-11; Philip Slater, *The Origin and Significance of the Frankfurt School: A Marxist Perspective* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1977), ch. 5; Andrew Arato, "Aesthetic Theory and Cultural Criticism," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, eds. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Urizen Books, 1979), pp. 185-224; Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York Columbia University Press, 1982), chs. 5 and 6; and Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukacs, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California, Press, 1982).

2. Amongst numerous possible examples, see Edward Shils, "Daydreams and Nightmares: Reflections on the Criticism of Mass Culture" "*Sewanee Review*, 65 : 4 (Autumn, 1957); Leon Bramson, *The Political Context of Sociology* (Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 37-43, 123-5; Helmut Lethen, *Neue Sachlichkeit 1924-1932: Studien zur Literatur des "Weissen Sozialismus"* (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1970), pp. 25-7; Salvador Giner, *Mass Society* (London: Martin Robertson' 1976), pp. 166, 179; C. W. E. Bigsby, "The Politics of Popular Culture," in *Approaches to Popular Culture*, ed. C. W. E. Bigsby, pp. 11-15; Alan Swingewood, *The Myth of Mass Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 11-16; Herbert Gans, *Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste* (New York: Harper, 1974), pp. 52-56; James Gilbert, "The Intellectuals and Mass Culture," in *Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 111-113; and, in the first attempt to study the whole range of mass-culture critiques, Patrick Brantlinger, *Bread and Circuses: Theories of Mass Culture as Social Decay* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 23, 84, 222-248.

3. Theodor W. Adorno,"Uber Jazz,"in *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung* 5 : 2 (1936), p. 225. In the following treatment of the Frankfurt school-conservative analogy I have been

influenced, in part, by some briefer comments by Martin Jay in "The Frankfurt School in Exile," *Perspectives in American History*,6 (1972), pp. 371-73.

4. ....., "aber Jazz ' *Moments Musicaux* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1964), which includes a 1937 supplement, pp. 119-120. A similar contrast appears in "On Popular Music," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9 (1940), pp. 17-21.

5. Herbert Marcuse, "The Affirmative Character of Culture," first published in 1937 and contained in *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 88-133.

6. Adorno, *Prisms* (London: Spearman, 1967 , p. 26.

7. ....., *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), P. 2.

8. ....., *Prisms*, p. 22. Bourdieu's rich analysis of "cultural capital" may be found in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1984).

9. Andreas Huyssen, "Adorno in Reverse: From Hollywood to Richard Wagner," *New German Critique* 29 (Spring-Summer, 1983) ,p. 17. This essay is republished in Huyssen's *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1987).

10. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* (London: New Left Books, 1981), p. 90.

11. See my *Marxism and Modernism*, pp. 258-60.

12. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner*, p. 31.

13. Huyssen,"Adorno in Reverse," p.18.

14. See Adorno, "On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regresion of Listening," in *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, pp. 270-99.

15. Adorno, "On Commitment," *Aesthetics and Politics*, ed. Perry Anderson et al. (London: New Left Books, 1977), p. 189.

16. Adorno's enormous *Aesthetic Theory*, cited in n. 7, is particularly revealing on this issue, for it is often concerned to show the contemporary "truth value" of "ugliness" and "dissonance" in modernist art. See,for example, pp. 19-21.

17. This is the procedure followed by Gans in *High Culture and Popular Culture*, pp. 65-118.

18. Adorno to Benjamin,18 March 1936, in *Aesthetics and Politics*, pp. 123-5.

19. On this and other aspects of Adorno's response to American life, see Martin Jay, "Adorno in America," *New German Critique*,

31 (Winter, 1984), pp. 157-182.

20. Adorno, *Ietroduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York: Seabury Press, 1976), p. 132.
21. ....., *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 341.
22. ....., and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972), pp. 139-40.
23. ....., *Aesthetic Theory*, pp. 265-66.
24. ....., and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Edlightenment*, pp. 135-6.
25. ....., *Minima Morolia* (London: New Left Books, 1974), p. 203.
26. ....., "On Popular Music," p. 38
27. ....., and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 137.
28. ....., "On Popular Music," p. 37.
29. ....., and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. xv
30. ....., *Minima Moralia*, p. 204.
31. ....., and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 121.
32. ....., *Aesthetice Theory*, p. 34.
33. See, for example, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 159. On this point see the analysis in Diane Waldman, "Critical Theory and Film," *New German Critique*, 12 (Fall, 1975), pp. 39-60.
34. See, for example, Adorno, *The Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York: Seabury, 1973), pp. 113-13.
35. Shils, "Daydreams and Nightmares," p. 604.
36. Amongst the most widely influential in this regard are Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Earlp Modern Europe* (New York: Harper, 1978); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford Un versity Press, 1975); and Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and The Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (New York Peuguin, 1982).
37. Clement Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch," in *Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America*, eds. Bernard Rosenberg and David Manning White (Glencoe, ill.: The Free Press, 1957), pp. 101-5.
38. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 325.
39. See, for example, Dwight Mcdonald, "A Theory of Mass Culture," in *Mass Culture*, pp. 59 73, which was written in 1953.
40. See ch. 4 of Pell's book which was published by Harper and Row in 1985.
41. Jose Ortega Y Gasset, *The Revolt of the Masses* (New York: New American Library, 1952), p. 7.
42. *Ibid.*, pp. 48-52.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 66-70, 87-88.

45. T. S. Eliot, "Notes Towards the Definition of Culture," in *Christianity and Culture* (New York : Harvest, n.d.), p. 185. Although the essay was written in the years 1943-38, it gave the elearest expression to ideas which Eliot had entertained for two decades.

46. See especially, F. R. Leavis *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* (Cambridge, Engl.: The Minority press, 1930); F. R. Leavis and Denys Thompson *Culture and Environment* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1933); and, the pivotal work for the whole *Scrutiny* movement which was led by Leavis, Q. D. Leavis (his wife), *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London : Chatto and Windus, 1932).

47. In *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* Leavis directed his fire against philistine book reviewers in the popular press, who in endangering the english lenguage were threatening the sinews of civilization. On the historical sources of Leavis's concern about the expanded intelligentsia, as well as his other worries, see Francis Mulhern *The Moment of Scrutiny* (London : New Left Books, 1979), p. 4-19.

48. On the semantic history, and cultural uses, of the term "masses" in elite discourse, see Salvador Giner, *Mass Society*; Asa Briggs, "The Language of Mass and Masses in Nineteenth Century England," in *Ideology and the Labor Movement*, eds. David E. Martin and David Rubenstein (London : Croom Helm, 1979), pp. 62-83; Wilhelm Vleugel, *Die Masse: Ein Beitrag Zur Lehre von den Sozialen Gebilde* (Munich: Duncker and Humbolt, 1930); and Serge Moscovici, *The Age of the Crowd: A Historical Treatise on Mass Psychology* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).

49. Bertolt Brecht, "Der Rundfunk als Kommunikationsapparat," *Gesammelte Werke* (Frankfurt a. M: Suhrkamp, 1967), 18 pp. 129-131.

50. Russell Berman, *The Rise of the Modern German Novel*(Cambridge, Mass;: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 234-5.

51. Brecht, "Die Essays von Georg Lukacs," *Gesammelte Werke*, 19, p. 298.

52. The discussion in these two paragraphs is based upon Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction, *"Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken, 1969), pp. 217-52.

53. On the Benjamin-Adorno conflict, including Adorno's response to the "Work of Art" essay, see Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, Wolin, *Walter Benjamin*, and Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*.

54. Amongst many accounts, see Maurice Crouzet, *The European Renaissance since 1945* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1970) and Stephen R. Graubard, ed., *A New Europe ?* (Boston: Beacon, 1967)

55. See Louis Hartz, *The Liberal Tradition in America* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955) and Clinton Rossiter, *Conservatism in America* (New York: Vintage, 1955).

56. Example include Adorno, "On Popular Music," pp. 47-8, Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 161 and Horkheimer, "Art and Mass Culture," *Critical Theory: Selected Essays* (New York: Seabury Press, 1972), p. 290.

57. David Held. *An Introduction to Critical Theory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), pp. 365-9.

58. On this episode see the articles by Adorno and Lazarsfeld in Donald Fleming and Bernard Bailyn, eds., *The Intellectual Migration; Europe and America, 1930-60* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969) and the constrasting accounts in Jay, *Dialectical Imagination*, pp. 189-93 and David E. Morrison, "Kultur and Culture: The Case of Theodor W. Adorno and Paul F. Lazarsfeld," *Social Research* 45:2 (Summer, 1978).

59. Todd Gitlin, "Media Sociology: The Dominant Paradigm," *Theory and Society* 6:2 (1978), pp. 205-54.

60. Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, "Mass Communication, Popular Taste and Organised Social Action," in Lyman Bryson, ed., *The Communication of Ideas* (New York: Harper, 1948), p. 106.

61. Adorno,"On Popular Music," pp.27, 45; *Minima Moralia*, p. 23; Adorno and Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 166.

62. William Leiss: *The Limits of Satisfaction: An Essay on the Problem of Needs and Commodities* (University of Toronto Press, 1976), pp: 59-63.

63. Lazarsfeld and Merton, "Mass Communication"; Razarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton: eds. *Communications Research, 1948-49* (NewYork: Harper, 1949), pp. 218, 243.

64. Daniel Czitron, *Media and the American Mind: From Morse to Mcluhan* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 128.

65. *Ibid;* and Robert Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), pp. 505-6.

66. Gans, *High Culture and Popular Culture*, pp. 65-118.

67. Waldman, "Critical Theory and Film, "p. 53 and Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*, pp. 22-3.

68. Peter Bachrach, *The Theory of Democratic Elitism: A Critique* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967, p. 64.

69 Michael Rogin, *The Intellectuals and McCarthy: The Radical Spectre* (Cambridge Mass.: The M. I. T. Press, 1967), p. 18.

70. Bernard Berelson, "Who Reads What Books and Why," in *Mass Culture*, pp. 119-25; Edward Shils, "Mass Society and its Culture," in Norman Jacobs, ed., *Culture for the Millions ? Mass Media in Modern Society* (Boston: Beacon, 1961), pp. 1-27; Daniel Bell, "The Theory of Mass Society, "*Commentary*, July, 1956. Of course after the 1960s Bell discovered adversarial forms of modernism with a vengeance. In *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976) he saw their spread as a major source of cultural, moral and social decline. One source of Bell's neo-conservative views were the post-1955 writings of Lionel Trilling on modernism. In the early 1950s, Trilling, along with his Columbia colleague Jacques Barzun, had also been a kind of mandarin optimist, although far more knowledgeable about the complexities and disturbing sides of high culture. See, for example, Trilling's and Barzun's responses to the symposium "Our Country and Our Culture," in *Partisan Review*, 1952, pp. 318-26 and 426-31.

71. Shils, "Mass Society and its Culture," p. 1.

72. Lyman Bryson, *The Next America: prophecy and faith* (New York: Harper, 1952); Russell Lynes, *The Tastemakers* (New York: Harper, 1954); David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950) and *Individualism Reconsidered* (Glencoe, Ill,: The Free Press; 1954), and Gans, *High Culture and Popular Culture*, whose central argument was stated as early as 1961 in "Pluralist Aesthetics and Subcultural Programming: A Proposal for Cultural Democracy in the Media," *Studies in Public Communication* 3 (Summer, 1961).

73. See *The Lonely Crowd* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 22n.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

75. In *The Seven Lively Arts*, first published in 1924 and reprinted by A. S. Barnes in New York in 1957, Seldes pioneered the aesthetic appreciation of selected figures and forms in mass culture—Krazy Kat cartoons, vaudeville, musical comedy, the Keystone cops, etc. By the 1950s, however, he was often quite ambivalent about the situation. See *The Great Audience* (New York: Viking, 1951) and *The Public Arts* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1956), the latter of which held out great hope, however, for improvements in mass media through the exertion of grass-roots presures upon producers. John Kouwenhoven celebrated the American "vernacular" style in architecture, jazz, radio serials and journalism in *Made in America: The Arts in Morden Civilization* (1948), while Reuel Denney explored aesthetics of ritual and myth in *The Astonished Muse: Popular Culture in America* (University of Chicago Press, 1957).

76. Czitron, *The Media and the American Mind*, pp. 181-2.

77. I am referring in this paragraph mainly to the work of the Birmingham Centre for the Contemporary Cultural Studies. On its theoretical trajectory since the early 1960s, see Stuart Hall, "Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms," in *Media Culture and Society*, 2 (1980), pp. 57-72,

and "Cultural Studies and the Centre: some problematics and problems, "in *Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980).

78. As examples of the first, see Herbert Marcuse, *An Essay on Liberation* (Boston: Beacon, 1969), Douglas Kellner, "TV Ideology and Emancipatory Popular Culture," in Horace Newcomb, ed., *Television: The Critical View* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982) and Frederic Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* 1:1 (Winter, 1979); the second approach is developed in Alexander Kluge and Oskar Negt, *Oeffentlichkeit und Erfahrung: Zur Organisationsanalyse von buergerlicher und proletarischer Oeffentlichkeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1973); the third tendency may be sampled in Leiss, *The Limits of Satisfaction,* Gitlin, "Media Sociology" and "Prime Time Ideology: The HegemonicProcess in TV Entertainment," *Television: The Critical View,* and Tania Modleski, *Loving With a Vengeance: Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (New York: Paladin, 1984).

79. Adorno, "The Culture Industry Reconsidered," *New German Critique,* 6 (Fall, 1975), "Transparancies on Film," *New German Critique,* 24-25 (Fall-Winter,1981-2) and "Freizeit," *Stichworte* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1969).

80. This is cited in n. 70.

81. Michel De Certeau, *The Practise of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. xii-xiii. The book was published in France in 1980.

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"Torn Halves of an Integral Freedom" Adorno's and Benjamin's Readings of Mass Culture

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"Adorno Meets the Cadillacs" is the title of a recent article by Bernard Gendron which suggests a renewed interest in the rapprochement of two hostile positions :

> the aggressively opinionated and elitist stance of the critical theorist towards the products of mass culture—for which the early Adorno is the best example—and the passive attitude of the consumer of mass entertainment.

(1) A new generation of critics takes the compatibility of these two faces of (post) modern culture as the point of departure for a "new"kind of research which brings together cultural critique and the pleasure of the entertainment world. My question is :

> Do these critical analyses of mass culture depart from the Adornian frame of argument, as is often claimed, or do they rather reinscribe certain presuppositions inherent in the critical model of the culture industry ? Can a rewritten model of high theory serve as an adequate tool for the study of low culture ? Or—and this is the other side of the question—do the products of mass culture indeed have critical potentials which Adorno was unable to discover ? In what follows I will reconstruct the historical debate between The odor Adorno and WalterBenjamin, concentrating on the discourse in which their arguments are formulated. I believe that we can draw certain conclusions from this historically prior exchange that bear on the current debate,

Gendrons position maintains that the apparatus of cultural critique is just as relevant for the study of popular culture as it is for the high modernist art on which it was modelled (such as the silent movie or the swing phase in jazz). Although he knows about the weaknesses of Adorno's theory (above all, its ahistorical stance), he nevertheless argues for its applicability and plausibility. The significance of Adorno's questions, according to Gendron, outweighs the internal problems of the model. His aim is "to engage Adorno's productivist approach in a constructive dialogue with the more recent and fashionable reception approaches. "(2) Adorno's attack on the standardizing tendency of the music industry calls into question those analyses which celebrate the listener of rock 'n' roll music and his/her capacity for rewriting or rereading the dominant message of the recorded text by lending it personal meaning. Gendron seeks to preserve Adorno's notion of critique,although he sees the necessity of changing the critical model so that is can deal better with the critical potential inherent in the mass-produced text itself or to the consumer and his/her rewriting skills.

Another position takes as a point of departure precisely those critical potentials of the mass-cultural product or its consumer which are played down in Gendron's argument and completely negated in Adorno's understanding of the consumer's attitude towards certain forms of mass entertainment. This is currently the most fashionable critical model, and it exists in various forms and contexts. "The Birmingham School of Culture Theory" adopts this view its investigation of how particular groups or subcultures 'negotiate" meaning and rewrite the dominant discourse into their own alternative style.(3) Recently, Tania Modleski's work on film, Kaja Silverman's study on women and fashion, and John Caughie's investigation into television series have argued such a position. They focus on the reception strategies of the consumer and attribute a (politically) progressive meaning to certain ways of rewriting the dominant fication.(4) The persistence of this model is noteworthy, but what is even more striking is the fact that it is nowhere called into question or even theoretically lustified. My analysis of the historical dimension of this position will show that it is precisely this model of rewriting that Adorno is engaging in when he praises certain forms of "classical" culture over the derivative manifestations of the culture industry. But his work still functions within a theoretical paradigm which can account for, or at least

philosophically derive, rewriting strategies. Research on popular culture in a postmodern society, however, presumably transcends this paradigm and rejects the results of Adorno's analyses. That this is far from the truth will come out clearly, I hope, in the following pages.

Let me give you an example which juxtaposes two applications of either argument and which will lead us directly into a closer investigation of the historical debate between Adorno and Benjamin regarding the assessment of mechanically reproduced products of the culture industry. The first case is taken from Kaja silverman's study. Silverman employs the model of rewriting within the context of a feminist reading of (wo) men's fashions in which she argues for a reappraisal of thrift-shop dressing.

> By recontextualizing objects from earlier periods within the frame of the present, retro is able to "reread" them in ways that maximize their radical and transformative potential — tochart the affinities, for instance, between fashions of the forties and feminism in the eighties, or between fashions of the twenties and the "unisex look" of the late sixties. Vintage clothing is also a mechanism for crossing vestimentary, sexual, and historical boundaries .. Thrift-shop dressing recycles fashion's waste, exploiting the use value that remains in discarded but often scarcely—worn clothing. Because it establishes a dialogue between the present day wearers of that clothing and its original wearers, retro also provides a means of salvaging the images that have traditionally sustained female subjectivity, images that have been consigned to the waste-basket not only by fashion, but by "orthodox" feminism. (5)

Thus by shopping in thrift stores women can reread the dominant dress code in a personalized manner and thereby transform its meaning. An alternative meaning may emerge by way of quoting and juxtaposing different historical styles. But it also may be that such a plurality of styles effectively neutralizes any particular statement that women want to make about certain fashions and certain meanings.

On the other side, there are Horkheimer and Adorno and their radical reading of the family name as the non-identical. They are reacting to the American custom of calling one an other simply by the first name, which can be quite shocking to someone who grew up in a culture that interpreted such a practice very negatively.

> First names, those archaic remnants, have been brought up to date either by stylization as advertising trade-marks (film stars' surnames have become first names). or by collective standardization. In comparison, the bourgeo is family name which, instead of being trademark, once individualized its bearer by *relating him to his own past history*, seems antiquated. It arouses a strange embarrassemeni in Americans. In order to hide the awkward distance between individuals, they call one another "Bon" and "Harry," as interchangeable team members. This practice reduces relations between human beings to the good fellowship of the sporting community and is a defense against the true kind of relationship (6)

By insisting upon one's family name, one appeals to an individualized history which cannot simply be exchanged for another one. Like Silverman's retro, Horkheimer's and Adorno's insistence on the family name is conceived as contradicting the dominant mode of expression, Whether that is actually so is of no importance here, Both examples, however, employ the rewriting model in a trivializing way which seems to mirror personal preference rather than a theoretically reflected position. Adorno and Horkheimer could have easily noted that it is not the simple fact of how people are addressed which makes a difference but the context in which this act of signification occurs. The mere act of dressing in a retro style means nothing in itself. It can only assume meaning and make a statement within a larger (and politically determined) contaxt.(7) What is taken for granted by this position, but not critically reflected, is a fairly classical concept of the subject or individual which "negotiates" this process of rereading and rewriting. In a similar vein, this position seems to assume that what is rewritten or reread has to be clearly objectifiable. what this juxtaposition demonstrates is that both positions function within one and the same paradigm—that of immanent critique—and that the newer version does not escape the flaws of the older one. On the contrary, it reaffirms them without transforming the model.

But what did Adorno really have to say about popular culture ? Why did he react the way he did to Walter Benjamin's attempt to come to terms theoretically with the new media-in his case the silent film.I will look at documents from the period between 1935, when Adorno wrote his first letter to Benjamin regarding the Arcades project, till his reworkings of his harsh line in the fifties andsixties.He then proposed a transformed model for analyzing the ruptures manifest in popular culture as inherently progressive

elements.(8) When critics talk about Adorno's sweeping condemnation of popular culture, they usually pick one of these essays at random. This position is then used either as a strawman or as a positive point of departure. Not only do I belive that this practice grossly oversimplifies Adorno's stance (and how it was transformed later), but it also produces well-known results. By focusing on Adorno's and Benjamin's model I wish to give a slightly new bent to the discussion.

From the very beginning of their debate Adorno is concerned about the systematic eradication of the trace of difference inscribed in the cultural text. He is interested in putting this trace "under erasure," thus preserving it in a transformed way. In order successfully to operate his dialectical analysis on a text, Adorno needs this oppositional trace within a dominant discourse which he conceives as *mediated totality*. If a text doesn't exhibit such traces which undermine its general argument, then his Critical Theory can say nothing about it except that it adheres to the logic of identity. Such an identity-logical text is then juxtaposed to other texts which displa ya healthy relationship between the mediated whole and the oppositional elements within. Adorno thus differentiates between "good" and "bad" texts, and mechanically reproduced texts – as well as Benjamin's own theoretical writings—belong for him to the second category. And this is alarming for Adorno. In his first letter to Benjamin from August 2, 1935, he reproaches him for employing a strategy which he calls 'de-dialecticization," i. e. reducing the dialectical image to one meaning and cutting short its social function :

> "I should like to say that ambiguity is not the translation of the dialectic into an image, but the 'trace' of that image which itself must first be dialecticized by theory."(9)

This becomes more apparent in Adorno's letter to Benjamin from March 18,1936,in which he responds to Benjamin's essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction."(10) Adorno speaks of an accord between himself and Benjamin on the subject of technology and how it relates to dialectical theory. "It is this accord," Adorno writes, "which for me constitutes the criterion for the differences that I must now state, with no other aim than to serve our 'general line, which is now so clearly discernible.(11)" It is this general line, the party line of Critical Theory, so to speak, which Adorno is trying to defend against Benjamin's transgression of the dialectical paradigm. Adorno reproaches and reprimands Benjamin

the "traitor" in a manner totally out of keeping with the dialectical theory Adorno is trying to defend. He demands in a militant tone "the complete liquidation of the Brechtian motifs" in Benjamin's thinking. (12) "(Cinema) and (the great work of art) bear the stigmata of capitalism, both contain elements of change (but never, of cource, the middle term between Schonberg and the American film). Both are torn halves of an intergral freedom, to which however they do not add up. "(13) This passage suggests that no dialectical movement can mediate between the two positions—which, incidentally, are analogous to the two art forms of autonomous and mass-produced art. Adorno's praxis, however, says otherwise; and we will see how he reworked his argument into a more pragmatic approach to the phenomenon of mass culture.

I went to reflect on the rift between Adorno's *praxis* of eradicating all oppositional motifs from the critical text and his *theory* of underwriting such subversive elements within a mediated totality. Benjamin's theory could have functioned exactly as a subversive tendency within the larger context of immanent dialectics. There must be more to Adorno's reaction than simply his rivalry with Brecht or even a factual disagreement with Benjamin over how to assess mechanically reproduced art. And indeed, it seems as if Adorno feels threatened by this new discourse which values reproduction over production, laughtet over reflection and aggressive reasoning. Adorno criticizes this new discourse as something quite reactionary; and not only Benjamin's theory of reproducible art, but jazz, mass culture in general, popular music and television series all belong to this realm of phenomena which the Adorno of the thirties and forties utterly condemns as reaffirming the status quo of social power relations.

In order better to understand why Adorno feels so threatened by the presence of these phenomena, let me specify more precisely the nature of his critique. What is it that makes this new discourse so dangerous? Adorno hates its connection with *laughter*, as he asserts in his letter to Benjamin, since it seems to undermine the "seriousness" of theory. Furthermore, standardization aims at conditioned reflexes in the listener / viewer which encourages passivity

and obedience as a response. All these features are, as Andreas Huyssen has recently pointed out, stereotypically associated with the feminine. A feminized mass culture becomes the presupposition or the hidden subtext of high culture/high theory, which is the realm of the male, i. e the discourse of production and aggressive reasoning. (14) In light of this theory, Adorno's aggression towards the Other of his theory, on the exclusion of which his dialectical analysis largely depends, seems to follow a certain logic. What is more, he addresses this relation between high art and low culture as the purity of autonomous art which is only possible by *excluding* its other :

> light art, mass culture, women, and the lower classes. What he does not see is that his own discourse of high theory rests on similar exclusions and operates with similar exclusionary strategies.

If this is so, from a feminist position we should be able to derive a thorough critique of the dialectical model Adorno employs. And indeed, Tania Modelski's study links the theory of mass culture with feminism and points to the importance of "deconstructing the hierarchical relation that exists in the opposition production/repreduction and writerly/readerly in order to search out the radical potential of the subordinate terms..."(15) And it is through a feminist reading of a particular work that she puts her theory to work. She argues that, on the one hand, the critical male position itself implies elements of pasivity and that, on the other hand, the so-called obedient feminine can successfully manipulate and critically interfere in the world. Projecting such a feminist reading into the positions discussed above, one could associate Adorno's position with the phallocratic model of speech and Benjamin's strategy with a feminine economy such as the one so forcefully outlined by the French feminist Luce Irigaray. Phallocratic logic is typically an instrumental logic which structures the economy of activity, production, and mediation. And it was precisely the lack of this structural field which Adorno criticized in Benjanmin's study of mechanically reproduced art, as well as in the products of the culture industry themselves. Huyssen has pointed to a passage in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* in which the authors claim that mass culture "cannot renounce the threat of castration." (16) In his essay on jazz, Adorno indeed identifies the strategies of mass produced art with this threat of castration :

> "The aim of jazz is the mechanical reproduction of a repressive moment, a castration symbolism."(17) A feminist

reading of Adorno's critique of mass culture may strike Critical Theory in its Achille's heal and explain—to the extent that this is possible and desirable—why Adorno so anxiously held onto his privileges.

The more difficult task, however, is establishing the link between Benjamin's transformed version of a critical theory of mass culture and a different, feminine economy, as described by Irigaray. Does a deconstructed "Critical Theory" and "mass culture" really disrupt the model of masculine discourse, and if so, how does it modify it? That Adorno's dialectical model of Critical Theory is enmeshed in a power structure and an ideology of the patriarchal sort manifests itself in internal contradictions within his work. This has been established on the example of his exclusionary strategies and his threat of castration. The new Benjaminian style, however, follows a different economy.

> This 'style,' or 'writing' of women tends to put rhe torch to fetish words, proper names, well-constructed forms. This 'style' does not privilege sight; instead, it takes each figure back to its source, which is among other things *tactile*."(18)

And, what fs more; such a feminine economy of writing "would preclude any distinction of identities, any establishment of ownership, thus any form of appropriation."(19) And as a place where this 'syntax' may be deciphered Irigaray mentions women's laughter.

> Isn't laughter the first form of liberation from a secular oppression? *Isn't the phallic tantamount to the seriousness of meaning?* Perhaps woman, and the sexual relation, transcends it "first" in laughter ?(20)

It seems as if Adorno's appeal to the seriousness of dialectics is predicatəd on fear of exactly this :

> the liberating laughter of the repressed subtext of high art/ theory. And this is also where Benjamin attempts a transformation of Critical Theory :
>
> he questions Adorno's negative interpretation of the fact that music and lyric poetry have become comical.(21) In his rebuttal of Benjamin's essay, Adorno reiterates the necessity for seriousness in music and expresses his shock over the modern comical uses of autonomous art, say a jazz version of

a Bach fugue, which, according to him, is a "disrespectful play" carried ont with "sadistic humor." Let me quote this passage at length, since it is vital for my argument.

> In the face of regressive listening, music as a whole begins to take on a comic aspect. One need only listen to the uninhibited sonority of a choral rehearsal from outside. The experience was caught with great force in a film by the Marx brothers, who demolish an opera set as if to clothe in allegory the insight of the philosophy of history on the decay of the operatic form,. ... Music has become comic in the present phase primarily because something so completely useless is carried on with all the visible signs of the strain of serious work. By being alien to solid people, music reveals their alienation from one another, and the consciousness of alienation vents itself in laughter. In music or—similarly in lyric poetry—the society which judged them comic becomes comic. But involved in this laughter is the decay of the sacral spirit of reconciliation.(22)

Adorno is deeply disturbed by this laughter; his model is incapable of conceptualizing this new form of musical language and he downgrades its significance in a militant fashion. Benjamin doesn't quite understand why Adorno responds in this way. He is already speaking from a level beyond the phallocratic model of critical analysis and is open to new forms of cultural expression. However, his reaction to the advent of the sound film, which he characterizes as "an operation of the cinema industry disguised to break the revolutionary primacy of the silent film, which generated reactions that were hard to control and hence politically dangerous," shows that this is only a small step in the direction of a new discourse.(23)

Here we can identify the point at which Critical Theory begins to transform itself. In the first half of his condemnation of the sound film, Benjamin agrees completely with Adorno's position on the culture industry, which here appears in the metaphor of a corporate cartell that threatens the last remnant of a revolutionary cultural praxis (i e. the silent film). Yet the movement of the sentence leads us beyond this model. Adorno would never have agreed with Benjamin's assessment of the political nature of the immediate. On the contrary, he would have

criticized this idea from the standpoint of determinate negation, which presupposes a mediated relation between individual details and the system as a whole. A politically dangerous phenomenon can, in Adorno's judgment, only emerge in opposition to this system, but never as the manifestation of pure difference. The concept of the undecidable has, according to Adorno, no political value whatsoever, except perhaps a reactionary result. (24) Benjamin has a very different view of politically dangerous nature of the undecidable, and it is of great interest in our context since it was picked up by Jacques Derrida and other contemporary thinkers. To their mind, it is precisely the undecidable nature of a gesture which secures its "political" threat,and Adorno's fear of laughter seems indirectly to support this thesis. He perceives mass culture and its laughing intervention in the pockets of high culture as a dangerous rupture of his own critical discourse.

Dana Polan makes an interesting connection which will lead my investigations into a new series of arguments. He distinguishes between an older conception of mass culture, which is ingrained in an understanding of ideology as creating and manipulating social objects, and a postmodern form of mass culture which operates in an environment where "it may no longer be necessary for capitalism to produce a ready-and-waiting pool of interpellated subjects."(25) If this is so, we need to rethink our model of writing about culture and art in general; this means that we can neither fall back on naive conceptions of a receiving subject which critically rewrites the messages of the culture industry, nor on a model of critical analysis which rests on the concepts of identity and difference, of authenticity and derivativeness. And here an interesting proposal from within Critical Theory should be considered. I am thinking of Albrecht Wellmer who criticizes Adorno for ignoring the possibility of reflecting on a postmodern concept of subjectivity and rationality as a critical alternative to the immanent model of subject philosophy. Wellmer thinks that Adorno's text can be interpreted against the grain by extrapolating from it the notion of a de-centered subjectivity which corresponds to the delimited forms of (post) modern art.

The two concepts can be thought together in the following way :

> the inclusion of the non-integrated, the subject-alien and the senseless in modern art makes an ever higher degree of

flexible and individual organization necessary. The 'opening up' or 'de limitation' of the work is to be thought of as the corollary of a progressive capacity to aesthetically *integrate* the diffused and dispersed. (26)

This capacity of modern art can, according to Wellmer, function as a model for a more fluid concept of the subject which aesthetically synthesizes nonidentical moments into a new type of social totality "in which the diffused and the non-integrated, the senseless and the split off would be brought home to a sphere of non-violent communication — within the open forms of art as well as in the open structures of a no longer rigid type of individuation and socialization."(27) This theoretical transformation of a psychological concept of subject and reason into a linguistically grounded model of communicative intersubjectivity figures in Wellmer's theory as an analogy both for the de-limited forms of modern art and for the phenomenon of popular culture. Wellmer accordingly opts for a more Benjaminian understanding of mass culture and its "emancipatory" potentials. It is these ambivalences that need to be salvaged from Adorno's condemnation of popular culture.(28) What is necessary is an aesthetics of (mass) culture which mutually illuminates the phenomenon of (post) modern art and a de-centered conception of ego-identity-a new economy of the subject. According to Wellmer, popular culture can supply such a model.

I began my investigation into the transformation of Critical Theory with a reading of Adorno's debate with Benjamin in the thirties, looking in particular at Adorno's exclusionary rhetoric with regard to Benjamin's position. The question was : Why did Adorno have to exorcize these phenomena from his own critical model ? A feminist perspective suggested a fear of the feminine aspects of mass culture as the hidden subtext of high theory/art. This fear manifested itself in Adorno's threat of the liberating laughter as the undecidable, the unruly detail that escapes every attempt at integration. The (political) danger of uncontrollability thus emerged as an alternative to the traditional model of Critical Theory as determinate negation. Those two models of oppositional intervention may be brought together in Wellmer's dialectics of modernism and postmodernism which suggests a restructuring of the theoretical paradigm of critical analysis: a flexible form of subjectivity and de-limited cultural products can only be conceived when we go beyond the paradigm of subject philosophy and purposeful action.

How could this be done ? How can critical theory be transformed in order successfully to integrate the phenomena of (post) modern life ? To answer this question I want to go babk and reconsider the role of diversity in Adorno's thought. I said earlier that Adorno's theory of the autonomous work of art requires a certain amount of difference within, i.e. oppositional elements within the mediated totality of the system. In jazz, radio music, movies by the Marx brothers, and television series this subversive element has been successfully eradicated. Now, that would truly be an alarming fact and I can certainly understand why Adorno felt it was his duty to point this out. There are, however, several ways of responding to his indictment. One could first of all show that he was wrong, that the products of the culture industry do send out signals of divergence, that they have always done so and that it is up to the audience to determine the meaning of a cultural product. (29) Or, one could point to the historicality of Adorno's arguments and say that in a postmodern society this model no longer makes sense since the strategy of ruptures is no longer at the margin of the dominant cultural praxis. Ruptures in themselves do not have anymeaning, they have to be employed by a (politically) progressive framework in order to come into play as strategies of intervention(30)

This critique arrives at a similar assessment of criticality as determinate negation, i.e. as critique of an oversimplified notion of pure difference. Adorno's own rewriting of his earlier stance in the fifties and sixties seems to point in this direction. About "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture" he states that it is our duty "knowingly to face psychological mechanisms operating on various levels in order not to become blind and passive victims. We can change this mechanism of far reaching potentialities only after we look at it in the same spirit which we hope will one day be expressed by its imagery."(31) It almost seems as if Adorno has abandoned the belief that mass culture will shrink under the blows of his devastating critique. Instead, he adopts a more pragmatic perspective and works to employ its mechanisms for emancipatory purposes This new shift in focus weakens one of the most crucial arguments against his analysis of popular culture :

> the ahistoricality which led him to focus on one phase of a particular phenomenon (the swing phase of jazz for example) and generalize on this basis about the entire realm of popular culture. As Miriam Hansen has argued, Adorno's own rewritings of his argument underwrite the progressive elements in his theory that were always already present.(32)

What does not change, however, is Adorno's grounding of Critical Theory in the classical paradigm of mediation, reification and the dialectics of identity and difference in which the culture industry and its products are portrayed as the agents of a hegemonic ideology. Adorno is very self-concious about the mobel for his arguments :

> it is "serious music" which so favorably differs from popular music since "(e) very detail derives its musical sense from the concrete totality of the piece which, in turn, consists of the life relationship of the details and never of a mere enforcement of a musical scheme."(33) In popular music, however, the position of the detail is absolute and interchangeable.
>
> To sum up the difference :
>
> in Beethoven and in good serious music in general—we are not concerned here with bad serious music which may be as rigid and mechanical as popular music—the detail virtually contains the whole and leads to the exposition of the whole while, at the same time, it is produced out of the conception of the whole. In popular music the relationship is fortuitous.(34)

Adorno thus judges popular music against the model of classical music which is constructed as mediated totality. And it is this model which his dialectically conceived version of Critical Theory can best describe and evaluate. But the fact that his model fails him in his analysis of popular culture should not be sufficient reason for condemning it completely. It all culminates in Horkheimer's and Adorno's indictment of the sound film—and we should keep in mind that Benjamin would have applauded here :

> The sound film, far surpassing the theatre of illusion, leaves no room for imagination or reflection on the part of the audience, who is unable to respond within the structure of the film, yet deviate from its precise detail without losing the thread of the story; hence the film forces its victims to equate it directly with reality.(35)

It is the *lack* of structurally included deviations which Horkheimer and Adorno criticize, employing a Brechtian model of film aesthetics. This model attributes to the audience the possibility of rewriting what they see and inflecting it with a particular meaning which can

deviate from the overall meaning of the film-text. And at this point Horkheimer and Adorno push the theory of ruptures one step further :

> it is not the total *lack* of deviations that is deplorable, but rather the lack of *liberal* deviations, deviations that are not "calculated mutations which serve all the more strongly to confirm the validity of the system."(36) The silent film, and the radio, for example, still supply the audience with such liberal deviations (the difference between text and image in the silent film, for example) and incorporate (rather than eradicate) the traces of contradictory interpretations.

This model of rewriting / rereading the dominant fiction derives its philosophical legitimacy from Horkheimer's and Adorno's conception of Critical Theory and the function of social critique which they attribute to certain cultural phenomena. It rests firmly on the concept of subjectivity as the nonidentical trace of an integral freedom. The fact that the authors cannot theoretically account for transformations within the cultural sphere indicates the limits of their respective frameworks. To rehabilitate this matrix in a theory in which the subject marks its ruptures in the dominant fiction seems, however, without any theoretical legitimation. One cannot simply apply this model to the phenomena of postmodern culture and hope that the aporias have meanwhile disappeared.

Let me summarize in a concluding note the problematics of my investigation. I have described the model of imminent dialectical critique, its unwritten assumptions about the nature of the critical process and the subjective agent which lends credibility to its concern. I have also discussed several attempts at transforming this ctititical paradigm itself, thereby looking at a broad spectrum of questions :

> What precisely has to be changed and can this change only affect part of the theory and leave other parts untouched ? What occurs when we integrate what was systematically excluded from the paradigm, that on which, in fact, the very essence of this paradigm depends ? What happens when we reasses the political nature of indeterminateness, of uncontrolability ? It is enough simply to rethink subjectivity in a decentered model ? All these questions attempt a transformation of the critical model determined by Adorno's and

Benjamin's discussion about the nature of mechanically reproduced art and lead us beyond the critical impasse of theory in a postmodern age. Is it possible for us today to recombine the "torn halves of an integral freedom" that Adorno mentioned in his letter to Benjamin? Some studies seem to suggest that it is. If we are aware of the shortcomings of the "old" Critical Theory and do not repeat its failing, it should be possible to redefine a new critical theory which not only meets the Cadillacs, but is well equipped for such a meeting.

Notes and References

(1) See Bernard Gendron, "Adorno Meets the Cadillacs," *Studies in Entertainment : Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, ed. Tania Modleski (Bloomington : Indiana Univ. Press, 1986), pp. 18-36.

(2) Gendron, "Adorno Meets the Cadillacs," p. 36.

(3) See especially Dick Hebidge's study of *Subcultures : The Meaning of Style* (London : Methuen, 1979).

(4) See Tania Modelski's argument about the manipulative strategies of pleasure consuming in her "Femininity as Mas(s) querade : a Feminist Approach to Mass Culture," *High Theory / Low Culture : Analysing Popular Television and Film*, ed. Colin MacCabe (Manchester : Manchester Univ. Press,1986), pp. 54ff; She explores the argument in depth in her book *Loving With a Vengeance Mass Produced Fantasies for Women* (Hamden, Conn. : Archon Books, 1982), esp. pp. 113f. See also Janice Radway, *Reading the Romance : Women, Patriarchy, and the Popular Literature* (Chapel Hill : The Univ. of North Carolina Press. 1984). pp. 210ff; Kaja Silverman, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse," *Studies in Entertainment*, pp.151ff; John Caughi, "Popular Culture : Notes and Revisions" *High Theory/ Low Culture*, p. 169. See also Eric Rentschler's use of the phrase "dominant fiction," which he borrows from Jacques Rancière, in his article on "The Use and Abuse of Memory : New German Film and the Discourse of Bitburg," *New German Critique*, 36 (1985), p. 85; Rentschler implies with the term the "encoding of history in an all but invisible discourse, one

presenting spurious harmonies while repressing all Sources of potential disturbance and contradiction."

(5) Silverman, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse," p. 151.

(6) Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (New York: Continuum, 1982), p. 165.

(7) Dick Hebdige, who reads the styles of certain subcultures as subversive statements, is aware of the limitations of this argument. He is cognizant of the fact that his reading is nothing more and nothing less than a critical position, not a reflection of an actual statement on the part of the members of a certain subculture. Subculture can be interpreted as "a form of resistance in which experienced contradictions and objections to this ruling ideology are obliquely represented in style" (p. 133). So what is subversive is not the signifying practice of the subculture itself, but the interpretation which elevates it into the realm of critical resistance. She his *The Meaning of Style, pp.* 133ff.

(8) An English version of Adorno's and Benjamin's letters appears in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso, 1977), pp. 110-141; other works that are available in English are: "On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening, *"The Essential Frankfurt School Reader,* ed. Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (New York: Urizen, 1978), pp. 270-299; (with the assistance of George Simpson), "On Popular Music," *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science,* 9 (1941), pp. 17-48; with Horkheimer), "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception," *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, pp. 120-167; "A Social Critique of Radio Music," *Kenyon Review*, 7 (1945), pp. 208-217; "Perennial Fashion-Jazz.' reprinted in *Prisms*, trans. Samuel and Shierry Weber (London: Neville Spearman, 1967), pp. 119-132; "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture," reprinted in *Mass Culture: The Popular Art in America*, ed, Bernard Rosenberg and David Massing White (Glencoe, Ill. : The Free Press, 1957, pp. 474-488; "The Culture Industry Reconsidered," *New German Critique*, 6 (1975), pp. 12-19; "Transparencies on Film," trans. Thomas Y. Levin, *New German Critique*, 25 (1981-2), pp. 199-205.

(9) *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 119. Benjamin's theory of pre-history, redemption, and arrested dialectic is, of course, what is meant here; but what is more important in our context is how Adorno uses this strategy of eradicating the trace of ambiguity, which he criticizes

Benjamin for, as a critical weapon against Benjamin and particularly against those theoretical details which Benjamin picked up from Brecht.

(10) "Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968,, pp. 217-251.

(11) *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 121.

(12) *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 124.

(13) *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 123.

(14) Huyssen,"Mass Culture As Woman: Modernism's Other," *Critical Approaches to Mass Culture*, pp. 191ff.

(15) Modleski, "Femininity as Mas(s)-querade: A Feminist Approach to Mass Culture," p. 42.

(16) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 141; see Huyssen, "Mass Culture As Woman: Modernism's Other," p. 192.

(17) "Perennial Fashion—Jazz," p. 129.

(18) Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which is not One*, trans. Catherine Porter with Carolyn Burke (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985), p. 79.

(19) *This Sex Which is not One*, p. 134.

(20) *This Sex Which is not One*, p. 163.

(21) See *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 141.

(22) "On the Fetish-Character of Music and the Regression of Listening," p. 297-8.

(23) *Aesthetics and Politics, p. 140.*

(24) See "Perennial Fashion—Jazz," p. 122.

(25) Dana Polan, "Brief Encounter: Mass Culture and the Evanation of Sense," *Studies in Entertainment*, pp. 182-3.

(26) Albrecht Wellmer, "On the Dialectic of Modernism and Postmodernism," *Praxis International*, 4 (1985), 357.

(27) Wellmer, "On the Dialectic of Modernism and Postmodernism," pp. 357-8. Wellmer at this point borrows extensively from Jürgen Habermas' critique of Horkheimer's and Adorno's reading of mass culture and ideology; she his *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. I : *Reason and the Rationalization of Society*, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984), pp. 372ff.

(28) See Wellmer, *Zur Dialektik von Moderne und Postmoderne* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1985), pp. 41-2.

(29) See, for example, Douglas Kellner's work, which argues for the contradictory messages of TV shows. For him these messages are conflicts that express the ideological and

social changes in advanced capitalism and thus revitalize the traditional role of popular culture as on element of protest within the dominant culture. She his "TV, Ideology, and Emancipatory Popular culture," *Socialist Review*, 45 (1979), pp. 24ff.

(30) The failure to supply such a framework underlines those recent studies on mass-produced texts which focus on the complexity of reading strategies but offer no (political) interpretation of these strategies. In her book, Tania Modleski only hints at this problem in her concluding chapter, contending that "while popular feminine texts provide outlets for women's dissatisfaction with male-female relationships, they never question the primacy of these relationships." See *Loving With a Vengeance*, p. 13.

(31) "Television and the Patterns of Mass Culture," p. 487.

(32) See Hansen, "Introduction to Adorno, 'Transparencies on Film' (1966)," *New German Critique*, 25 (1981-2), p. 197.

(33) "On Popular Music," p. 19.

(34) "On Popular Music," p. 21.

(35) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 126.

(36) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, p. 129.

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Habermas and Postmodernism

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In the burgeoning debate over the apparent arrival of the postmodern era (or over the implications of a discourse that claims such an era has arrived), no contributor has been as forthright and unflinching a defender of the still uncompleted project of modernity as Jürgen Habermas. In several recent works, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne, Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit* and his response to the essays collected by Richard Bernstein in *Habermas and Modernity*,[1] he has expanded his critique far beyond the first, tentative essays he published in the early 1980's.[2] These initial efforts' in part because of their imperfect command of the French intellectual scene and in part because of their imperfect command of the French intellectual scene and in part because of their controversial attribution of a conservative political implication to postmodernism, proved a lightning rod for criticism. In many quarters, Habermas was pilloried as a naively one-dimensional celebrant of an outdated liberal, enlightenment rationalism. Although the relation of Habermas' critique to the specific context out of which it emerged, that of the cynically anti-political *Tendezwende* in the West Germany of the late 1970's was on occasion acknowledged,[3] by and large, he was chided with having superficially reversed the profound analysis of the Enlightenment's failure offered by the older generation of the Frankfurt School. Indeed, because he has been understood as a staunch defender of universalist, totalizing reason, his work has been accused of being only the most recent and subtle version of an intellectual tradition which inadvertently fostered the authoritarian political uniformity it claimed to resist. Habermas, the passionate defender of democratically achieved consensus and generalized interests, was thus turned into the terrorist of coercive Reason *malgrē lui*.

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Whether or not his more recent works will dispel this caricature remains to be seen. From all reports of the mixed reception he received in Paris when he gave the lectures that became *Die philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*,the odds are not very high that a more nuanced comprehension of his work will prevail, at least among certain critics. At a time when virtually any defense of rationalism is turned into a brief for the automatic suppression of otherness, heterogeneity and non-identity, it is hard to predict a widely sympathetic hearing for his complicated argument. Still, if such an outcome is to be made at all possible, the task of unpacking his critique of postmodernism and nuanced defense of modernity must be forcefully pursued. One way to start this process is to focus on a particularly central theme in his work, which has hitherto been relatively ignored. Because it concerns an issue closely related to his similar critique of post-structuralism, it will also illuminate Habermas' no less virulent hostility to the other leading "post" phenomenon of our no longer modern world.

The theme in question is what might be called the opposition between differentiation and *difference*.The latter term, a neologism coined by Jacques Derrida in a seminal essay now twenty years old, doubtless needs little introduction to contemporary readers of cultural criticism. I would only like to emphasize that Derrida specifically emphasizes its distance from differentiation. "Among other confusions," he notes, "such a word would suggest some organic unity, some primordial and homogeneous unity, that would eventually come to be divided up and take on difference as an event. Above all,formed on the verb 'to differentiate,'this word would annual the economic signification of detour, temporalizing delay; 'deferring."[4] Differentiation, in other words, implies for Derrida either nostalgia for a lost unity or conversely a utopian hope for a future one. Additionally, the concept is suspect for deconstruction because it implies the crystallization of hard and fast disticntions between spheres,and thus fails to register the supplementary interpenetrability of all subsystems, the effaced trace of alterity in their apparent homogeneity, and the subversive absence undermining their alleged fullness or presence.

Now, although deconstruction ought not to be uncritically equated with postmodernism, a term Derrida himself has never embraced, one can easily observe that the postmodernist temper finds *differance* more attractive than differentiation as an historical or, better put, post-historical

conceptual tool. The meta-narrative of a process of original unity progressively articulating itself into a series of increasingly autonomous subsystems is far less compelling to it than an anti-narrative of heterogeneous, but interpenetrating movements that flow in no discernible historical or evolutionary direction. Even though the prefix "post" implies temporal irreverrsibility, it has become a favorite pastime to find the postmodern already evident in such earlier figures as Flaubett.[5] Postmodernists like Jean-Francois Lyotard explicitly eschew any yearning for the restoration of a pre-differentiated unity or the construction of a dedifferentiated totality In a reconciled future. Instead, they valorize a fluid network of proliferating and incommensurable *differances*, which escape reduction to a finite number of common denominators. In the neo-Wittgenstenian language Lyotard adopted in *The Postmodern Condition* (but later abandoned as too anthropocentric in *Le Différend*), he contends that "there is no possibility that language games can be unified or totalized in any metadiscourse."[6] But if unity or totality is denied, so too is the apparent necessity of those binary oppositions that characterize traditional thought. Thus, the recent postmodernist "non-exhibition" staged at the Centre Pompidou in Paris by Lyotard was called "Less Immatériaux" to stress the overturning of the rigid separation between mind and matter, subject and object, consciousness and body, even life and death.[7] Furthermore, as Jacques Bouveresse, one of Lyotard's most persistant critics, notes in his recent diatribe *Rationalité et Cynisme*, "the deliberate effacement of conventional frontiers that exist for the moment among sciences, philosophy, literature and art is the shibboleth *(mot d'ordre) par excellence*, it seems to me, of postmodernity."[8]

If we also look more closely at the aesthetic dimension of the postmodern condition, we will see the same anti-differentiating impulse at work. Thus, the art critic Suzi Gablik notes in *Has Modernism Failed ?* that a great deal of performance art in particular makes us anxious because "it violates our sense of boundaries; no distinction is made between public and private events, between real and aesthetic emotions, between art and self."[9] As such, postmodernism can be seen in part as the non-utopian anti-climax to what Peter Bürger has defined as the avant-garde, as opposed to the modernist, project: the abolition of the separate institution of art and its reabsorption into the life-world out of which it originally came.[10] Typical of this postmodernist penchant for violating boundaries

is the breakdown of the differences between high and low art, culture and kitsch, and the sacred space of the museum and the profane world without. In architecture in particular, which has been widely recognized as the cutting edge of the postmodernist offensive, what Charles Jencks called "radical eclecticism"[11] has meant the disruption of the time-honored distinctions between different styles in favor of an historical pastiche, as well as the breakdown of the hierarchical superiority of "serious" architecture over a more popular and vulgar vernacular, such as that celebrated by Robert Venturi in his defense of Las Vegas.[12]

What is, however, important to recognize in all of these transgressions of various frontiers is the abandonment of any hope for a new totalization in the sense of a dialectical *Aufhebung* or sublation. Instead, an untotalized network of supplementary *differances* is posited as the superior alternative to the seemingly rigid and unyielding dichotomies of modernist differentiation. Thus, the postmodernist sensibility has borrowed a great deal from that dimension of feminist thought which rejects the abstract universalism underlying any homogenizing humanist discourse, while also remaining suspicious of the essentializing opposition between the sexes so much a part of patriarchal culture.[13]

Now, because Habermas has been out spoken in his distrust of both post-structuralist and post-modernist theories, and has heretofore not really absorbed the feminist critique of the Western tradition,[14] he has variously been accused of hoping for a u opian totalization based on the universal power of rationality and rigidly holding on, like a typically German anal-compulsive, to the existent differentiations of a modernization process still worth salvaging. The first charge is exemplified by Lyotard's complaint that "what Habermas requires from the arts and the experiences they provide is, in short, to bridge the gap between cognitive, ethical and political discourses, thus opening the way to a unity of experience."[15] Habermas, he believes, still remains hostage to the fantasy of "humanity as a collective (universal) subject"[16] seeking a perfect consensus in a meta-language game transcending all others.

The second and in some ways contrary criticism is typified by the Derridean argument of Dominick LaCapra, who concedes Habermas, strong distaste for Hegelian or other meta-subjects, but still questions his alternative :

> The prolem, however, is whether, in rejecting reductionism and dialectical synthesis, Habermas goes to the extreme of analytic dissociation which is itself constitutive of a logic of domination. Habermas does not directly see how his own analytic distinctions, which are useful within limits, may be rendered problematic, especially when they are taken as categorical definitions of realms of thought or action.[17]

As an antidote, LaCapra urges Habermas to Pay more attention to the supplementary and carnivalesque play of language, which would undermine the apparently rigid differentiations posited in various ways during the development of his work. More recent deconstructionist critics of Habermas like Michael Ryan and Jonathan Culler have echoed this advice, in each case defending *differance* as superior to categorical distinctions.[18]

A more patient reading of Habermas' demanding corpus than is evident in these critiques would, I want to suggest, allow us to appreciate the virtues of defending a certain notion of differentiation against post-modernist *differance*. First it is clear that although the very early Habermas may have espoused the position attributed to him by Lyotard, that of believing in a meta-subjective species being capable of achieving a universal consensus, at least as early as 1972 and possibly even during the positivist dispute of the 1960's, he had explicitly abandoned this position.[19] Repudiating the idea of a Hegelian-Marxist universal subject as a residue of a discredited consciousness philosophy, he began to call instead for the nurturing of a plurality of intersubjectively grounded speech communities. In fact, his main complaint against post-structuralism is that it merely inverts consciousness-philosophy by denying the subject, and thus ironically is as holistic as the logocentric traditions it opposes. Rather than calling for a unity of experience, as Lyotard contends, Habermas has scrupulously defended the value of distinctive forms of interaction. not merely among human beings, but also between man and nature. In fact, his scepticism towards the project of reconciling humanity and the natural world has brought him under fire from such advocates of a more Marcusean or Blochian strain in Western Marxism, such as Thomas McCarthy, Joel Whitebook, and Henning Ottman.[20] Instead of holding out hope for a utopian reenchantment of our disenchanted world. Habermas has resolutely acknowledged man's disembeddedness, that is, differentiation from the natural world,

But second, while valorizing differentiation, Habermas has fully recognized that the process has been plagued by severe difficulties. Even as he has called modernity an uncompleted project worth carrying forward, he has been very sensitive to the deep discontents it has spawned. Unlike the more sanguine defenders of modernization who peopled the American and West German academies in the postwar era, he has always been enough of a student of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* to recognize that the mere refinement of analytic categories and the increased complexity of modern society are by no means emancipatory in themseles.

Habermas' attitude towards differentiation is, thus, a highly complicated one. To do justice to it would require tracing its origins in at least two traditions, sociological and philosophical. To make sense of the former would mean beginning with Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim in the 19th century and passing on to 20th-century theorists like Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Niklas Luhmann and Wolfgang Schlucter, all of whom are critically appropriated in Habermas' massive *Theory of Communicative Action* and elsewhere.[21] We would then have to reconsider the heated sociological controversies over evolutionism and functionalism and make distinctions among segmental, and functionalist forms of differentiation. And finally, we would have to consider the responses of such contemporary sociologists as Anthony Giddens to Habermas reading of the tradition.[22]

To probe the second, philosophical tradition, we would have to go back at least as far as Kant and examine his three critiques with their separation among forms of judgment. We would then have to trace efforts to undo Kant's differentiations, beginning perhaps with Hegel and continuing up through the Western Marxist struggle to articulate a defensible concept of totality.[23] And we would have to conclude with a consideration of Habermas' recent exchanges with Gadamer and other defenders of radical hermenutics, who try to provide a new foundationless foundation for a holistic approach to understanding.

Rather than attempt so ambitious and foolhardy a reconstruction of the roots of Habermas' attitude towards differentiation, let me simply point to the major implications he has drawn from his contact with these disparate sources. Habermas' rational reconstruction of the evolution of Western societies posits a relatively undifferentiated society of

hominids who became what can be called human through both the division of labor and the development of kinship structures.[24] At the very beginning of the evolutionary process, as he conceptualizes it, there is thus already a form of differentiation between subsystem of the whole. Similarly, the distinction between labour and language means that any universal explanation of human developement, say, a vulgar Marxist productivism or a vulgar deconstructionist pantextualism, must be rejected as reductionist. For the process of evolution takes place on several levels, which roughly can be grouped under two rubrics. The first, which Habermas calls system integration, derives from an instrumental relationship between man and his natural environment. Initially generated by the dialectic of labor, system integration spawns steering mechanisms, like money and bureaucratic power, which achieve a certain autonomy of their own. The second level, which Habermas calls social integration, refers to norms and values, which are derived from a communicative rather than instrumental relationship among actors, who have the capacity to be active agents rather than mere bearers of structural forces. It is only in the modern period beginning in the 18th century, so Habermas contends, that the distance between system and social integration becomes especially evident with the differentiation of subsystems of economics and administration, the decentering of world views (what Weber calls the "disenchantment of the world" and the uncoupling of law from morality.

Unlike more complacent functionalist theorists of evolutionary differentiation, Habermas recognizes the potential for radical distress in this process. In particular, he is sensitive to the disproportionately advanced development of system as opposed to social integration in modern capitalist and bureaucratic socialist societies. Both types of integration can be understood as emerging against the background of a life-world in which rationalization takes place when communicative argumentation supplants more authoritarian and coercive forms of social coordination. System rationalization, however entails means-ends rationalism, whereas social or communicative rationalization involves other forms of reciprocal intersubjective interation. In the modern world, the former has revealed itself as more powerful than the latter, leading to what Habermas calls the "colonization" of the life-world by system or instrumental rationality. Hostility to this trend has expressed itself in many ways, including the derogation of all forms of reason as dominating and coercive. It is,

however, Habermas' contention that unless we carefully distinguish among types of rationalization, we risk regressing beyond the genuine achievements of modernization. Thus, he writes, the deconstructionist critique of logocentrism become legitimate when it understands its target, "not as an excess, but as a deficit of reason"[25] because of the partiality of the subject-centered, instrumental rationality it misidentifies with reason *tout court*.

Following Weber and before him Kant, Habermas stipulates a differentiation among three basic types of reason in the sphere of values: cognitive (or scientific), moral and aesthetic. The Enlightenment had hoped that the emancipatory potential of each of these spheres could ultimately be harnessed for practical purposes. "The 20th century," Habermas admits, "has shattered this optimism. The differentiation of science, morality and art has come to mean the autonomy of the segments treated by the specialist and at the same time their splitting off from the hermeneutics of everyday communication. This splitting off is the problem that has given rise to those efforts to 'negate' the culture of expertise."[26] Although understanding the motivation behind these attempts to dedifferentiate and thus end the alienation of the separate spheres from each other and from the everyday life-world, Habermas is nonetheless very reluctant ro abandon the Enlightenment project entirely. For with it came the refinement of rationalization itself, which resists the reduction of modern life to any one common denominator, rational or otherwise.

Habermas' argument in this regard is worth following in some detail, because it has so often been misconstrued by those who see him as the advocate of a terroristically universal form of reason. First of all, although Habermas sees each sphere as having undergone a variant of what can be called rationalization, he nonetheless explicitly rejects the idea that reason means the same thing in each case. In an earlier essay on his attitude towards modernism, I challenged him in particular to clarify what he meat by rationality in the aesthetic sphere[27] Was he claiming in the manner of, say, Suzi Gablik in her book on *Progress in Art* that Piaget's developmental cognitive categories could be applied to aesthetics, as he argued they could to cognitive and moral development ? His reply was that art criticism, which arose with the differentiation of autonomous art from its religious-ceremonial context,

has developed forms of argumentation that specifically

> differentiate it from the forms of theoretical and moralpractical discourse. As distinct from merely subjective preference, the fact that we link judgements of taste to a criticizable claim presupposes non-arbitrary standards for judgement of art. As the philosophical discussion of "artistic truth" reveals, works of art raise claims with regard to their unity (harmony: *Stimmigkiet*), their authenticity, and the success of their expressions by which they can be measured and in terms of which they may fail. [28]

Thus, in the discourse about art, there is an argumentative rationality that resists reduction to moral or scientific reason.

Nor only does aesthetic discourse reveal such a rationalization, Habermas continues; so too does art immanently considered. In art itself, there is a type of learning process," which is cumulative: "what accumulates are not epistemic contents, Habermas contends, "but rather the effects of the inner logical differentiation of a special sort of experience: precisely those aesthetic experiences of which only a decentered, unbound subjectivity is capable."[29] The increasingly decentered and unbounded subjectivity of artistic experience has an ultimately emancipatory potential, for it "indicates an increased sensitivity to what remains unassimilated in the interpretive achievements of pragmatic, epistemic, and moral mastery of the demand and challenges of everyday situations; it effects an openness to the expurgated elements of the unconscious, the fantastic, and the mad the material and the bodily."[30] Thus, "art becomes a laboratory, the critic an expert, the development of art the medium of a learning process—here, naturally, not in the sense of an accumulation of epistemic *contents*, of an aesthetic 'progress'—which is possible only in individual dimensions--but nonetheless in the sense of concentrically expanding, advancing exploration of a realm of possibilities opened up with the autonomization of art."[31] In short, instead of providing a straightjacket for transgressive, heterogeneous experiences, as those who formulate a simple opposition between art and reason assume, aesthetic rationalization, in the dual sense of critical and productive learning processes, allows, indeed encourages, a proliferation of artistic stimuli to a widened consciousness. Only the modernist autonomization of art, its differentiation as an institution of its own, makes such a rationalization possible.

The extreme autonomization of both esoteric art and hermetic

aesthetic criticism does, to be sure, create pressures for their reintegration with the life-world out of which they originally emerged. Here Habermas admits to a certain ambivalence. On the one hand, he rejects what he sees, following Adorno, as the premature, forced and impotent *Aufhebung* of art and life in such movements as Surrealism. Yet on the other hand, he recognizes that too rigid and inflexible a detachment of art from life courts the danger of forfeiting art's ultimate capacity to reinvigorate the life-world by giving it a higher level access to those expurgated experiences it normally marginalizes or suppresses. Too radical a break between art and life also threatens to cause the well-springs of aesthetic expression themselves to run dry. He hesitates to affirm an immediate reintegration, however, because he contends that the utopian dedifferentiation of art *by itself* is insufficient to undo the pathologies of modernization. A new constellation of the separate value spheres with their expert rationalized discourses and the communicative life-world of everyday experience is needed in order to maximize the emancipatory potential in the project of modernity. This neither necessitates the collapse of all of these now distinct realms into one universal language game, as Lyotard accuses him of advocating, nor the rigid maintenance of the boundaries of the differentiated spheres, as his deconstructionist critics aver he upholds. Instead, a more nuanced mediation of relatively, but not absolutely commensurable realms is a preferable alternative.[32]

In a recent essay on "Modern and Post-modern Architecture,"[33] Habermas spells out the implications of this argument in the aesthetic field that is now at the cutting edge of the debate. Modernist architecture, he points out, was at once functional and formalist, following both the socially progressive imperatives of, say, early Bauhaus radicalism and the anti-ornamental purism of constructivist abstraction. In both ways, it sought to break with a sterile traditionalism and use the methods and materials of the modern world. As such, it was based on a mediated interaction between non-aesthetic needs and the development of immanent aesthetic reflexivity. The post-modernists are right, Habermas admits, in recognizing that the utopian social intentions of the early modernists went away when the international style became the emblem of corporate capitalism and the excuse for alienating and impersonal mass housing. But here the problem was not so much the Enlightenment ambition at the root of the modernist quest, as its distorted application in terms more of instrumental, system rationality than communicative, social rationality.

The postmodernists go too far, Habermas suggests, in reaction to this failure by seeking to separate formalist and functional imperatives entirely and retreat into an eclectic celebration of historical styles, which conservatively affirm all of them merely because they once existed. Any attempt, moreover, to generate a vitalist architecture, which would immediately restore all severed ties with the life-world-here perhaps Habermas is thinking of the Heideggerian-inspired call for a Critical Regionalism by Kenneth Frampton and others[34] —risks turning into an antimodernist nostalgia for a pre-differentiated form of life. An immanent critique of the limitations of modernist architecture, acknowledging its achievements as well as its failures, is thus preferable to a wholesale turning of the page, which offers only pseudo-solutions to the pathologies of modern life.

Premature de-differentiation is, in fact, one of the most troubling of those false answers, which Habermas sees as legitimated by the postmodernist discourse of *differance*. In his latest book, *Die philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, he criticizes Foucault, Derrida and also Adorno for their undifferentiated critique of modernity: "Enlightenment and manipulation, conscious and unconscious, forces of production and forces of destruction, expressive self-realization and repressive desublimation, freedom-guaranteeing and freedom-eliminating effects, truth and ideology—all of these moments are confused with each other."[35] The dedifferentiation of the value sphere of modernity are,moreover, purchased at the cost of the tacit elevation of one of them, aesthetics, understood in an essentially irrationalist sense. For Habermas,the current fascination with Nietzsche betrays this inclination, for the new Nietzscheanism "represents the differentiation of science and morality as the developmental process of a reason that at the same time usurps and stifles the poetic, worlddisclosing power of art,"[36] which it seeks to resurrect. But in making art somehow prior to differentiation, in assuming that rhetoric is somehow more fundamental than philosophy,[37] it fails to see that the very sphere of art itself is the result of a process of differentiation. In other words, it is mistaken to offer an aesthetic colonization of the life-world as an antidote to its instrumental rational counterpart produced by the hypertrophy of science and system integration in modern capitalism.

Similarly, Foucault's effort to collapse cognition and power is based on a problematic dedifferentiation of the will to knowledge and the

will to power, which reduces all the human sciences to little more than subtle instruments of discipline and normalizing control. Likewise, Derrida's critique of Austin fails to register the linguistic differentiations of the communicative life-world in which fictional discourse has been usefully distinguished from other language games.[38] In short, much postmodernist analysis has been vitiated by a confusingly ahistorical failure to recognize that certain patterns of differentiation have emerged in ways that defy the attempt to say that they are always already undermined. And moreover, it is precisely the separate rationalization of the distinct spheres that must be defended as a way to avoid a holism of indiscriminate *differance* that merely turns on its head the logocentric holism of reductive sameness. Albrecht Wellmer puts Habermas' alternative cogently when he writes,

> we have to distinguish between those irreversible differentiation process, which signify the end of traditional society and the emergence of specifically modern,universalist conceptions of rationality,freedom,and democracy on the one hand,and the specific form in which these differentiation processes have been articulated and institutionalized in capitalist societies. It is obviously to the *latter* only that the ideas of a sublation of formal law, politics, or art can meaningfully apply. What they can mean is that could be called a new "permeability" of the relatively autonomous subsystems or cultural spheres for each other.[39]

Such an answer may, to be sure, raise a few questions of its own. How can we tell, for example, when a healthy balance has been struck between permeability and boundary maintenance? If, on the one hand, the boundaries become too fluid, aren't we forced into a postmodernist *differance* in which supplementarity reigns supreme? If, on the other, they have become too rigid, might it no longer be possible to assume even the partial commensurability that is at the root of Habermas' guarded optimism about the modernist project? How can we, moreover, be certain that it is the only the specific differentiations of the Western modernization process that posses enough rationality to be worth defending? As Thomas McCarthy points out in questioning Habermas' debt to Luhmann's systems theory, it is important to insure that "the possibility of democratization as dedifferentiation of economy and state not be metatheoretically ruled out of court by systems-theoretic borrowing. Here

again, the question arises of whether it should be superseded by some non-regressive form of dedifferentiation."[40] The same question arises for the other forms of articulation defended by Habermas in his eagerness to avoid abandoning the modern project before its emancipatory potential is fully tapped. It is perhaps not by chance that *differance* has often come to be the rallying cry for many who feel excluded by the dominant forms of rationality in our culture.

And yet, after having acknowledged all of these questions, it still seems justifiable to conclude by stressing the value of Habermas' alternative to postmodernist *differance*. A recent critic of his position, Peter Uwe Hohendahl, complains that

> it is not quite evident why Habermas is not willing to use the critical force of deconstruction against the logic of differentiated systems. It seems that Habermas overstates his case when he describes deconstruction as a purely literary approach without concern for problem-solving in the realm of the life-world. Thus my suggestion would be: if we want to free the life-world from the constraints of the overarching system and its institutions, there is room for the project of deconstructive criticism, precisely because it questions the logic of systems.[41]

The answer to this complaint is that for Habermas, the differentiation of systemic institutions cannot be construed *solely* as a constraint on an oppressed life-world, but rather as the source of certain rationalizations that are worthy of continue preservation. It would therefore be dangerous to turn deconstruction from an essentially literary approach into a more universal solvent of all structures and systems. For the result would be a night of endless *differance* in which all cows were piebald, which is as deceptive as the old idealist trick of turning them all black. Instead, we should be more sensitive to the enlightening as well as obscuring implications of a much-maligned modernity whose promise is still greater than is assumed by those who counsel a leap into the postmodernist dark.

Notes and References

1. Jürgen Habermas, ***Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*** (Frankfurt, 1985); ***Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit*** (Frankfurt, 1985); "Questions and Counter-questions," in Bernstein, ed. ***Habermas and Modernity*** (Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

2. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity," ***New German Critique***, 22 (Winter 1981); "The Entwinement of Myth and Enlightenment: Re-reading ***Dialectic of Enlightenment***," ***New German Critique***, 26 (Spring-Summer, 1982).

3. Andreas Huyssen, "Mapping the Postmodern," ***New German Critique***, 33, (Fall, 1984), p. 30.

4. Jacques Derrida, "Differance," in ***Speech and Phenomena and Other Essays on Husserl's Theory of Signs***, trans. David Allison (Evanston, 1973), p. 143.

5. See, for example, Naomi Schor and Henry F. Majewski, ed. ***Flaubert and Postmodernism*** (Lincoln, 1984).

6. Jean-Francois Lyotard, ***The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge***, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minneapolis, 1984), p. 36.

7. ***Les Immatériaux*** was presented at the Centre Pompidou from March 28 to July 15, 1985. For a selection of texts reflecting on it, see the simultaneously published ***Modernes et Après; Les Immatériaux***, ed. Élie Théofilakis (Paris, 1985).

   It should be acknowledged that in certain of his writings, Lyotard himself emphasizes the impermeability of boundaries between radically commensurable spheres. See, for example, his dialogue with Jean-Loup Thébaud, ***Just Gaming***, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis, 1985), In the Afterword to volume by Samuel Weber, Lyotard is in fact criticized from a more rigorously Derridean perspective for being too obsessed with the purity and specificity of discrete language games. Instead, Weber asks him to be aware of their ambiguous interpenetration, that is, of the very ubiquity of ***differance***, which is privileged by the post-modern temper.

8. Jacques Bouveresse, ***Rationalité et Cynisme*** (Paris, 1984), p. 163.

9. Suzi Gablik, ***Has Modernism Failed ?*** (New York), 1984, p. 48.

10. Peter Bürger, ***Theory of the Avant-garde***, trans. Michael Shaw (Minneapolis, 1984).

11. Charles Jencks, ***The Language of Post-modern Architecture*** (New York, 1984), p. 127f.

12. Robert Venturi et al., ***Learning from Las Vegas*** (Cambridge, 1977).

13. Craig Owens, "The Discourse of Others: Fminists and Postmodernism," in Hal Foster,ed., ***The Anti-Aesthetic; Essays on Postmodern Culture*** (Port Townsend, Washington, 1983).

14. For a feminist-deconstructionist critique of Habermas, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Feminist Readings: McCullers, Drabble, Habermas," ***Union Seminary Quarterly Review***, 35, 1-2 (Fall, 1979-Winter, 1980). For a feminist critique closer to his own position, see Nancy Fraser, "What's Critical about Critical Theory ? The Case of Habermas and Gender," ***New German Critique***, 35 (Spring/ Summer, 1985).

15. Lyotard, ***The Postmodern Condition***, p. 72. This characterization of Habermas is also taken for granted by Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe in his 1982 discussion with Lyotard at Cerisy-la-Salle. See the transcript, "Talks," in ***Diacritics***, 14, 3 (Fall, 1984), p. 26.

16. ***Ibid***, p. 66.

17. Dominick LaCapra, ***Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*** (Ithaca, 1983), pp. 178-179.

18. Michael Ryan, ***Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation*** (Baltimore, 1982) p. 112f; Jonathan Culler, "Communicative Competence and Normative Force," ***New German Critique***, 35 (Spring/ Summer, 1985).

19. For an account of Habermas' break with the idea of a meta-subject, see Martin Jay, ***Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas*** (Berkeley, 1984), chapter XV.

20. Thomas McCarthy, "Rationality and Relativism: Habermas's 'Overcoming' of Hermeneutics," in John B. Thompson and David Held, eds. ***Habermas: Critical Debates*** (Cambridge, Mass., 1982); Joel Whitebook, "The Problem of Nature in Habermas," ***Telos***, 40 (Summer, 1979); Henning Ottman, "Cognitive Interests and Self-Reflection," in Thompson and Held, ***Habermas: Critical Debates***.

21. Jürgen Habermas, ***Theory of Communicative Action***, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1985).

22. Anthony Giddens, "Reason Without Revolution ? Habermas's ***Theorie des konnunikativen Handelns***," in Bernstein, ***Habermas and Modernity***.

23. Martin Jay, ***Marxism and Totality***.

24. Jürgen Habermas, ***Communication and the Evolution of Society***, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston, 1979) p. 130f.

25. Jürgen Habermas, ***Die Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne***, p. 361.

26. Jürgen Habermas, "Modernity versus Postmodernity, ***"New German Critique***, 22 (translation emended). Winter, 1981), p. 9.

27. Martin Jay, 'Habermas and Modernism," in Bernstein, ed., ***Habermas and Modernity***.

28. Jürgen Habermas, "Questions and Counterquestions," p. 200.

29. ***Ibid***.

30. ***Ibid***., p. 201.

31. ***Ibid***. For another recent consideration of the issue of aesthetic rationality that draws in part on Habermas, see Martin Seel, ***Die Kunst der Entzweiung: Zum Begriff der Ästhetischen Rationalität*** (Frankfurt, 1985). Ironically, the inflationary expansion of different aesthetic experiences has itself been connected to post-modernism by Charles Newman. See his ***The Post-Modern Aura: The Act of Fiction in an Age of Inflation*** (Evanston, 1985). Quantitative increase may not in fact be a fully satisfactory criterion of rationalization.

32. Ironically, despite his opposition to Habermas, Lyotard can perhaps be read against the grain as expressing hope for something similar. Thus. Cecile Lindsay recently writes, "By meticulously unmasking the operations of the various types of metanarratives, by turning the conditions of any narrative back upon itself, Lyotard's work points to a powerful potential for a dialogic situation among genres of discourse that have been kept separate and hierarchized." See her "Experiments in Postmodern Dialogue," ***Diacritics***, 14, 3 (Fall, 1984), p. 61. It is of course in a similar direction—without the overly intersubjectivist notion of dialogue—that Weber wants to turn Lyotard in the Afterword to ***Just Gaming*** cited above. But because Lyotard, like Habermas, is interested in preserving boundary maintenance to a greater extent than the more rabid deconstructionists, he preserves the hope for some sort of actual dialogue. For unless there is a sense of relatively autonomous language games capable of interacting, then all we have is an undifferentiated soup of homogeneous heterogenity, a kind of absolute concreteness that paradoxically turns itself into pure abstraction.

33. Jürgen Habermas, "Moderne und

Postmoderne Architektur," in *Die Neue Unübersichtlichkeit*.

34. See Frampton's "Toward a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance," in Hal Foster, *The Anti-Aesthetic*. Frampton, to be sure, is no friend of postmodernism and acknowledges a debt to the Frankfurt School, as well as to Heidegger and Hannah Arendt.

35. Jürgen Habermas, *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, p. 392.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 393.

37. Jonathan Culler, in the essay cited in note 17, chides Habermas for marginalizing literature and rhetoric in the name of philosophy. One might reply that the deconstructionist impulse in postmodernism is open to the reverse charge.

38. Habermas, *Der Philosophische Diskurs der Moderne*, p. 240.

39. Albrecht Wellmer, "Reason, Utopia and the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*," in Bernstein, *Habermas and Modernity*, p. 62-63.

40. Thomas McCarthy, "Complexity and Democracy, or the Seductements of Systems Theory," *New German Critique*, 35 (Spring/Summer, 1985), p. 50.

41. Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "The Dialectice of Enlightenment Revisited: Habermas' Critique of the Frankfurt School," *New German Critique*, 35 (Spring/Summer, 1985), p. 25.

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Approaching the Postmodernist Threshold : Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht

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Of several central questions arising from the debate about postmodernism and representation, the meaning of 'character" and its relationship to subjectivity is especially pressing in the theatre. If the notion of a unified subject is bankrupt, preculiar questions arise for an art form like theatre whose fundamental elements are the physical presence of a live human being performing actions before other observers. The works of Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht occupy a liminal space, somewhere between modernist and postmodernist discourses, a contested space, where recuperation by either critical lamp is possible and sometimes disturbing. This paper describes postmodern theatre practices and then locates Beckett and Brecht in relation to the key issues of subject and character.

Within theatre circles as elsewhere, the adequacy o' any defination of postmodern is typically contested. Nevertheless several readily recongizable aspects of postmodern performance can be identified :

> 1. An emphasis on the plurality of performance texts (written, the playwright's; visual, the director's, heurmenuetic, the actor's; provisional, the rehearsal's). 2. The presence of multi- sometimes contradictory social codes invoked and carried in the signs of the various performance texts, resulting in the inevitable mapping of ideology. 3. A highly contigent and mercurial audience reception, which reads through the inter- texts various socially constructed meanings, some shared, some oppositional. 4. The rejection of textual closure as authoritarian and finally terrorist, whether of gender or race or class or narrative shape. 5. The recognition of the body of

the actor in space as a sign among other signs, not as the priviledged representative of meaning, authority, logos, unified subjectivity.

This last issue is the most problematic precisely because it is difficult to separate the notion of a unified discrete subject from the image of a human being performing actions on a stage. As Charles Lyons has recently commented, "... the unity provided by the continuity of the presence of the actor / character tends to obscure the collision of readings that precedes the performance... No critical system can totally erase the presence of the human image that occupies the space of the stage—even though the presence of that aesthetic substitute may mark the absence of the illusive subject it replaces. "[1] This remark about the actor / character seems consonant with the post-modern insight that representation is all there is, cannot be avoided. To quote Derrida on Artaud, "Man...is that living being who constitutes representations by which he lives, and on the basis of which he possesses that strange capacity of being able to represent to himself precisely that life. "[2] So if there is an ontology here, it posits representation itself as the structure of being. Human beings play at / with representation, and they do so on the stage as elsewhere. The stage does not re-present some other-where, othertime present, it presents, in the present, what is itself a representation; thus the emphasis on the literality of much postmodern performance.

There is no clear consensus around a post-modern view of the subject, so let me state an underlying theoretical dilemma. Following Derrida's critique of presence, character in the theatre no longer carries the authority or logos of a center of meaning, essence or even integrity. Character is an element in the text, related to other units of language and gesture, imbricated with various, sometimes contradictory social codes and practices. Since the New Criticism, we have learned to look beyond the surface meaning for the latent meanings, creating a two-tier experience of phenomenological object (actor as character in space / time) and underlying structure of meaning (possibly linguistic, psychoanalytical, socio-economic, or more recently the endless play of signifiers.)

The dilemma is that the dramatic object, the character, is always accompanied by an actor who ghosts (Herb Blau's word) the

sign she presents. That is, through the effort of the actor, her intentionality, the heart beat pulses, the muscles strain, the mouth speaks this, not that, and the result is a reintroduction of unified consciousness into the discourse. of representation. While if we listen to Baudrillard, we may be moving toward abandoning it,the human image is still powerfully linked to a private scene or sphere "where the dramatic interiority of the subject, engaged with its objects as with its image is played out."[3] Perhaps Robert Wilson's highly prescribed movements succeed in representating the human image as conveyor of impulse, as nexus of conter valing tendencies, but even in *Knee Plays* or*Einstein on thē Beach* we encounter speaking subjects in space/time expending effort toward some goal, however ineffable. It is difficult to embody a high degree of passivity on the stage because we see in the human effort and import of its meanings indications of intention and agency, perhaps shop-worn and out of date but none-the-less still powerful in this most laborintensive of art forms, theatre. My colleague Phil Auslander has written perceptively about the fallacy of importing univocal presence to the multiferous selves underlying the performance.[4] Yet, attribute we will, and like sartre's early flawed yet powerful notion of an inert in-itself twinned with a selfconscious for-itself, the actor in relation to the role still instills concepts of consciousness and agency in most audience members, most of the time.

The representation of such agency is not in itself the limit case of modernism and is, in fact, a requirement for political efficacy in postmodern art. Rather, the demarcation of modernist from post-modernist seems to me to turn on the degree to which a Romantic moment of nostalgia or regret accompanies representations of the self as a site of struggle among competing social and psychological practices garnered from historical positioning. An aspect of this nostalgia is the maintenance .of desire for a utopian horizon, a fixed and incontrovertible sociopolitical teleology against which the present is always experienced as lack. The separate issue is the degree to which the self is interested in its own transmission and transformation, capable of intervention in the social practices which constitute it, if not in an autonomous way from outside the ideological grid, at least synthesizing the resources of the competing narratives and discourses crisscrossing its boundaries. This representation of agency makes the difference between what Hal Fostor has called a postmodernism of resistence and a postmodernism of reaction.[5] To the extext that agency

can be incorporated, post-modernism can be politically progressive; however, if it is truely a completely disinterested play of signification through a passive subject as conveyor, it is rife with possibilities for the reactionary politics with which it is so often charged.

The search for a threshold, for a way to mark the difference between modernism and postmodernism has led me to Samuel Beckett and Bertolt Brecht, arguably the two most important dramatists of our century, and the precursors of postmodern performance. Beckett constructs a radically decentered subject but only with attendant regret, something which seems to mark him as modernist, since regret as a symptom of Romantic nostalgia severely qualifies his postmodernist posture. As for Brecht, if he deconstructs unified subjectivity gleefully, or at least playfully, he simultaneously reasserts the imperative of overcoming fractured decentered subjectivity, often establishing a utopian Marxist horizon for his theatrical discourse.

In the case of Samuel Beckett, a modernist reading sees his characters as decimated ruins of selves still maintaining their "I" even while saying "Not I." From *Waiting for Godot* through *Endgame*, *Not I*, *Ohio Impromptu*, and *Rockaby*, Beckett depicts human consciousness at the end of its tether, reduced to series of processes controlling the self, which struggles in anguish to give up its projects of intentionality and personal meaning. In *Rockaby*, the voice and body of the woman on the stage are separated, as are the body and mouth in *Not I*. In the other three plays, characters exist in dyads, seemingly playing their texts for / to each other. In *Not I*, Mouth, referring to herself in the third person, struggles through a subjective process: "...as she suddenly realized ...gradually realized ... she was not suffering ...imagine ! ... not suffering ! ... indeed could not remember ... off-hand...when she had suffered less...unless of course she was...*meant* to be suffering... ha ! ... thought to be suffering... just as the odd time...in her life...when clearly intended to be having pleasure...she was in fact...having none...not the slightest .. "[6] This passage is typical of the seeming struggle in the text for the Mouth to clarify consciousness of her past, even if she won't own it (what ?... who ?... no ! ... she ! ...). However, when considering Beckett's insistence on the actor's rapid delivery in performance, it is also an impossible text for the audience to "sort through", attribute, decode. Peter Gidal has pointed out that the spectator is there by involved in the frustrating

effort to constitute self-as-subject "The viewer's attempt to see, the first process which forces her or him to be in process, and the viewer's attempt to hear, the first process also which forces her or him to be in process, and the viewer's attempt to know (understand), a first process which forces him or her to be in process, and the viewer's attempt to produce some signification, constantly, which could link, but the movement's rapidity and non-localisability all 'maintain, the stage 'object' as a subject-not-i. Not you the viewer either, as the normative identification-process, even that of self-identity (imagined or desired) is made impossible. The linkage between every signifier (the mark, or the word, or the immage), every signifier being a signified for another signifier, is broken down here, or not upheld.It is kept in process,so as to disallow a process of linkage from taking place."[7] Thus the performance of this text produces for the audience an experience of being a subject-in-process while it deconstructs any particular I-ness. To this extent, it is clearly postmodern in its affects and reception. However, the anguish of the severed budy which flaps its arms when the effort of the Mouth to deny the I in the narrative is expressed reactivates the Romantic nostalgia of modernism, for all of Beckett's acerbic and non-romantic terseness. There is a kind of celebration in the stubborn persistence and sometimes perversity of the I, present in tne ambiguous suggestion that human consciousness attentuates but persists, hangs on at the vanishing point but does not quite vanish. The stasis of the ending of *Endgame*, Hamm and Clov frozen in a not-quite-finished relation to their personal narratives, or of *Rockaby* with its gradual approach of the moment or death or dissolution of self which is, nevertheless, suspended in the final image—contribute to an elegiac pessimism I can only consider modernist.

Whether Beckett's representation of subjects-in-process is sufficiently strong in performance to counteract the tendencies in the work toward modernist regret is a function of particular performance conditions and audience reception, In *Rockaby*, the crucial moment is the one in which the audience decides whether or not to unify the separated formal elements, the voice and body of the woman on the stage. The formal separation is the text's strongest warning of the deliberate incompleteness of the characterization and also, at the same time, of the possible inadequacy of the notion of completion or unification for human subjectivity. If this rupture has sufficient weight in performance to put both

character and viewer into question, then the equation of person-body-consciousness-intent is problematized. Without both questions, a realist conception of character remains intact and only our ability to know or fully grasp it is at issue—this is only half the project.

The text of *Rockaby*, as Barbara Becker has pointed out, has a variety of elisions, deletions, and gaps which can be heightened or at least played by attention to meaning units, rhythms, schematic images. Actors, then, depending on their preparation and performance strategies, have some ability to use their instruments to bracket characters and throw their coherence into question. We are not far from Brecht's search for alienation effects or from the role of collage and montage in modern art, causing a confrontation between the material properties of a medium and the representation attempted within the medium. In the case of Beckett, Becker describes a kind of inverted Stanislavsky approach designed to help the actor destruct, in performance, a consciousness which must be conspicuous by its absence and/or deformity in order to reach the foregound of the audience's perception.[8] We leave Beckett, then, struggling to portray the process of I-ness, the contradictory and non-unified attempts at discourse and narrative which mark human subjects. Insofar as he succeeds, postmodernists may claim Beckett for producing that affect. Insofar as he declines to let go of a regret for failed authority or logos, he remains in the company of T. S. Eliot in the modernist Waste Land of frustrated desire.

In the case of Bertolt Brecht, the tendency toward Romantic nostalgia seems absent and the case for an active subject-in-process more promising. Brecht anticipated and developed practical demonstrations of several of the key operations of deconstruction and postmodernism. The early plays, especially, are unfinished texts, ambiguously subversive of any fixed meanings, unraveling notions of identity and permanence. *A Man's A Man* is an exemplary text here and Galy may be seen as post-Derridean man. He is a "man who does not wished to be named;" that is, specified through signification, identified, "subject / ified." Brecht represents an instance of the transformation and reconstruction of a subject, of Galy Gay into Jeraiah Jip, the human fighting machine. Brecht revised *A Man's A Man* over ten times, changing the way Gay's story is valued (is social engineering a good or bad thing ?), indeed

Brecht's penchant for constant revision is itself a postmodern refusal of closure. *Galileo* is another text where conrete history caused Brecht to reconstitute his vision of the protagonist and reverse his judgment. After the Atom bomb, the question of scientists' responsibility pressed Brecht to change the ending of the play and place more responsibility on Galileo.

In addition to portraying the transformation and reconstruction of subjects and insisting on the qualifying dialectic of history, Brecht also developed a dramatic technique for revealing the semiotizing of identity and its social construction—the Alienation Effect. As an acting technique, the A-effect makes possible the separation of action from act/or, or rather the perception of an action as socially constructed behavior which replaces, displaces, a series of other possible behaviors.[9] These other meanings are present in their absence; they do not take (a) place except when implicated as not-enacted. Brecht wrote of fixing the "not-but", which is precisely the foregrounding of suppressed, not-represented alternatives by showing the represented action as social gest. "He (the actor) will say for instance, 'You'll pay for that', and not say 'I forgive you'. He detests his children; it is not the case that he loves them. He moves down stage left and not up stage right, Whatever he doesn't do must be contained and conserved in what he does."[10]

Brecht developed this technique for representing the inscription of ideology on the subject, but the notion of "ideology" is not itself unproblematic. Brecht requires a theory which provides an association between subjects-in-process and the production of ideology. Louis Althusser's re-formulation is not compatible with Brecht's dramaturgy because it emphasizes an a historical ideological grid which determines individual positioning within a specific organization of reality. Trapped "inside'; a constructed subjectivity, individuals have no means of responding to the contradictions of the particular historical moment (although this may be *tres* post-modern).

Althusser admired Brecht but did not really see their incompatibility. In his discussion of the relationship between spectator and play, Althusser insists that Brecht's plays produce a new consciousness: "The play is really the production of a new spectator, an actor who starts where the performance ends, who only starts so as to complete it, but in life." There is however, no justified theoretical ground for this conclusion as elsewhere he notes, "He (the spectator) also sees and lives the play in the mode of a questioned false consciousness. For what else is he

if not the brother of the characters, caught in the spontaneous myths of ideology, in its illusions and privileged forms, as much as they are ?"[11]

Raymond Williams emphasizes human practice and experience as the source of values and meanings which are constituted by/through human sociality. While this is a more promising theoretical ground for Brecht's theatrical representations, it strays dangerously close to naive empiricism and old-style humanism in its appeal to a "structure of feeling' which relies on an epistemology of authentication through personal experience.[12]

Brecht's work implies some middle ground between Althusser and Willimas as it maps out a network of social positions involving contradiction and struggle which represent and implicate the spectator, If Mother Courage can damn the war at one stage-moment and embrace it in the next, it is so that we can recognize the relations between impulse and ideology in order to develop strategies of resistance or even deconstruction. The Brechtian actor, describing and commenting on the character, is engaged in his/her own ideological struggle, even as the performance unfolds—the representation of agency is endemic to the A-effect. Without the possibility of historical intervention, Brecht would become a reactionary post-modern, denying any avenue for actively engaging in the dialectics of social change.

In some of Brecht's major work, the utopian desire for a fixed political programe undermines this post modern critique of the unified self by its prescriptive and totalizing closure. Brecht's certainity about truth, respect for the efficacy of science, and old-fashioned Marxist solutions, reinstate him within the precincts of modernism. But in his insistence on subjects' dialectical relationship between acting on history and being acted upon, Brecht's subject is always in process, crisscrossed by the the contradictions of competing practices, engaged in ideological struggles which are implicated in historical and material processes.

In the work of Mabou Mines, Le Theatre du Soleil, or Heiner Muller, the positive legacies of Brecht and Beckett to postmodernism seem apparent. Here, Romantic regret and utopian projects drop away leaving urgent explorations of the possibility of resistance to the dominant hegemony. Actors construct character as sign, yet implicte themselves in the resulting critique of unified prsence. Beckett and Brecht helped create the theatrical tools to achieve this postmodernist experiment.

Notes and Referances

1. Charles Lyons, "Character and Criticism," Western Communication Association, Denver, fall 1985.
2. Jacques Derrida, "The Theatre of Cruelty and the closure of representation," *Writing and Difference, Trans. by Alan Bass, (Chicago : University of Chicago Press), 1978,* p. 237.
3. Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," in *Postmodern Culture,* Ed. by Hal Foster, (London: Pluto Press), 1983, p. 126.
4. Philip Auslander, "Toward a Concept of the Political in Postmodern Theatre," *Theatre Journal,* Vol. 39, No. 1, March 1987, pp. 20-34.
5. Hal Foster, "Postmodernism : A Preface," in *Postmodern Culture* p. xii.
6. Samuel Beckett, "Not I," *First Love And Other Shorts, (New York : Grove Press, Inc.) 1974,* p. 1-3.
7. Peter Gidal, *Understanding Beckett,* (New York : St. Martin's Press) 1986, p. 91.
8. Barbara Becker, "A Phenomenology of Character," Western Communication Association, Denver, fall, 1985.
9. See Terry Eagleton's discussion of the Derridean character of alienated acting : "The dramatic gesture, by miming routine behaviour in contrivedly hollow ways, represents it in all its lack, in its suppression of materials conditions and historical possibilities, and thus represents an absence which it at the same time produces. Terry Eagleton, "Brecht and Rhetoric," *Against the Grain,* (London : Verso) 1986, P. 167.
10. Bertolt Brecht, Short Description of a New Technique of Acting," *Brecht On Theatre,* trans. by Jhon Willett, (New York : Hill and Wang), 1964, p. 137.
11. Louis Althusser, "The 'Piccolo Teatro' : Bertolazzi and Brecht," *For Marx,* trans. by Ben Brewster, (New York : Pantheon Books), 1969, pp. 129-151.
12. For an excellent discussion of the issues involved in the debate on ideology see Jhon Higgins, "Raymond Williams and the Problem of Ideology," *Postmodernism and Politics,* Ed. by Jonathan Arac, (Minneapolis : University of Minnesota Press), 1986, pp. 112-122.

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Methodological Shadowboxing in Marxist Aesthetics : Lukacs and Adorno

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> The supreme criterion of [Lukācs] aesthetics . . . rests on the assumption that reconciliation has been accomplished, that all is well with society . . . . But the cleavage, the antagonism persists, and it is a sheer lie to assert that it has been overcome . . . in the states of the Eastern bloc. The magic spell which holds Lukācs in thrall . . . is a re-enactment of that reconciliation under duress he had himself discerned at the heart of absolute idealism.
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> —Theodor W. Adorno, 1958

> A considerable part of the leading German intelligentsia, including Adorno, have taken up residence in the 'Grand Hotel Abyss' which I described in connection with my critique of Schopenhauer as a beautiful hotel, equipped with every comfort, on the edge of the abyss, of nothingness, of absurdity. And the daily contemplation of the abyss between excellent meals or artistic entertainments, can only heighten the enjoyment of the subtle comforts offered.'
>
> —Georg Lukācs, 1962

No intellectual wants to be called the dupe of a repressive political system. No social critic wishes to be known as a self-serving nihilist. Yet, beneath the sophisticated rhetoric, those are the names being called in the passages quoted above. The polemical tone of this exchange characterizes much of the discussion surrounding Lukācs' ***Realism in Our Time***.[1] Soon after its publication

in German (1958) and English (1962) the book became a lightning rod for hostile criticism. Thirty years later one wonders why. Fifteen years after the leading antagonists died—Theodor W. Adorno in 1969 and Georg Lukács in 1971—one asks whether substantive issues were at stake. And a hundred years after Lukács was born (1885), one wonders whether his literary-critical positions deserve to be reconsidered.[2]

This article attempts to reassess *Realism in Our Time* More specifically, the article tries to uncover philosophical dimensions that have been buried by partisan polemics, First the English-language reception of Lukács book will be reviewed. Then I shall summarize disagreements between Lukács and Adorno about the relative merits of modernist and realist literature. Next I shall locate some bases for the disagreements summarized. My focus will be on the methodological categories of "worldview" (*Weltanschauung*—often translated as "ideology") and "technique" (*Technik*). The concluding section will propose ways to handle problems in Lukács methodology without abandoning his larger project of literary criticism.

Polemics and Dialogue

Lukács work in aesthetics and literary criticism has had a gradual but limited reception in English-speaking countries. Most of his writings first appeared in German. By the time of his death in 1971, however, wholesale condemnations had become politically correct in East Germany and politically fashionable among West Germanys New Left. During this time Ehrhard Bahr noted a "Lukács-Renaissance" in English-speaking countries.[3] It began with interest in Lukács writings on literature, several of which were translated in the 1960s.[4] In the early 1970s attention shifted to his political and philosophical writings, although the literary and aesthetic works continued to play a role.[5] Publication of Lukács *werke* since 1963 and further translations into English[6] have fed a steady trickle of scholarly studies.[7] It remains to be seen whether these studies will find their way into the mainstreams of English-language aesthetics and literary criticism.

The prospects for a broad reception do not look promising.[8] Many factors have contributed to this situation. Perhaps the most obvious

is narrow partisanship, which has been especially prominent in responses to *Realism in Our Time*. One of the first reviews in English, for example, dismisses the book in Cold War language. Donald Davie identifies Lukács with "the communist world" and says he is not "wholly frank" with "us." After objecting to unsubstantiated literary judgments, Davie concludes without evidence that many of these judgments "are surely just."[9] With this apparently unwarranted concession the book has been written off. Comparing such a review with the noncommittal comments of Max Rieser[10] or the enthusiastic endorsement of Raymond Williams,[11] one soon wonders whether hidden agendas are blocking fruitful dialogue.

The hazards of narrow partisanship are clear from an exchange in *Encounter* in 1963. Much of the exchange concerns Lukács' person and politics. *Ad hominem* arguments occur on all sides. The exchange began with George Lichtheim's harsh criticisms of *Realism in Our Time*,[12] Lichtheim claims that habitual accommodation to Marxist-Leninism has ruined Lukács' early promise and created an "intellectual disaster." Lukács has provided neither "a genuine critique of modernity" nor "authentic dialectical Marxism." In fact, "he has failed altogether as a responsible writer, and ultimately as a man."[13] Lichtheim's criticisms are arrogant, insensitive, and incorrect, according to George Steiner: "Lukács is one of the great literary critics of the 20th century," one who refused to "compromise with his aesthetic standards" despite the Party line.[14] In Alasdair MacIntyre's opinion, both Lichtheim and Steiner fail to see Lukács as a "tragic figure, the tragedy springing from the forms of his own thought."[15] The rest of this exchange continues in a similar vein. The result is that readers confront conflicting and ill-founded pronouncements about Lukács himself but learn little about the book under review and even less about the central issues in it.

Example of partisan readings or misreadings are easily multiplied. Harold Rosenberg suggests that much in *Realism in Our Time* "cannot be taken seriously." He consigns Lukács to the camp of reactionary critics.[16] Although seeming to take the book seriously, Susan Sontag finds in it little more than an objectionable "coarseness" and a "reactionary aesthetic sensibility." Her postscript declares Lukács incapable of "an intelligent involvement with the problems and objectives of 'modernism' in the arts."[17] Peter Demetz goes even farther, calling Lukács a "literary terrorist" whose Stalinist ideology blinds him to the nuances of literary

texts. *Realism in our Time* is little more than a "rearguard action" against the desires of younger writers in Communist countries.[18]

Reviews such as these might raise important points. Their tone and manner suggest however, that discussion would hardly be worthwhile. At the same time one wonders why so many prominent intellectuals have bothered to review the book if it is as bad as some of them have suggested. Lukācs seems to have hit raw nerves, eliciting partisan polemics rather than genuine dialogue. This is not to say that dialogue must be strictly nonpartisan in order to be genuine. Lukācs' own writings provide some eloquent examples to the contrary. There are instances, however, where partisanship becomes so narrow that dialogue is cut off. Several instances occur in the reception of *Realism in Our Time*.

Fortunately more favorable comments have countered these instances.[19] In addition several articles have taken the book seriously enough to test its methodology on specific literary works,[20] examine its categories,[21] or note its corrective contributions.[22] Objections raised in such articles tend to be discussable criticisms rather than polemical pronouncements. Furthermore such criticisms provide important clues to philosophical issues beneath partisan polemics. What is needed now, it seems, is an attempt to follow those clues and to uncover philosophical dimensions of Lukācs' controversial book.

My strategy is to enter this book through "Reconciliation under Duress," the well-known review by Adorno from which I quoted earlier. Although highly polemical, Adorno's review does provide discussable criticisms, and it highlights philosophical issues. Having been read widely in German and in English translation, "Reconciliation under Duress" has become an important document in Western Marxist aesthetics.[23] Perhaps it will help us recover philosophical dimensions of *Realism in Our Time*. To recover them, however, we must avoid merely using Adorno to attack Lukācs or using Lukācs to refute Adorno. Each text must be used to read the other. In this way we shall be able to note methodological bases for their obvious disagreements and hidden agreements. Philosophical issues will begin to emerge, and a philosophical reassessment will become possible.

Two objections could be raised to this strategy. One is that we need to examine major philosophical texts in order to understand fully

the philosophical issues in Adornos'review. We should be discussing Lukācs' two-volume ***Aesthetik***[24] and Adorno's unfinished ***Aesthetic Theory***,[25] There is something to this objection. Yet an initial grasp of philosophical issues can be gained from comparing more topical writings where philosophers are addressing contentious questions. A second objection might challenge the assumption that Adorno's review and Lukācs' book contain "hidden agreements" and "philosophical issues." In reply let me say that this assumption is no wild guess. Instead it is an hypothesis informed both by the texts themselves and by several instructive comparisons of Lukācsianand Adornian aesthetics.[26] Such comparisons suggest that beneath the heated rhetoric there is considerable philosophical agreement, and that the actual disagreements are themselves anchored in philosophical considerations. Our next step is to examine the most obvious disagreement, one concerning "modernism" and "realism" in literature.

Modernism and Realism

Adorno's review expresses forcefully his disagreement with Lukācs about the relative merits of modernist and realist literature. Yet the nature and the extent of this disagreement are not easily determined. According to Fredric Jameson, the dispute has tangled historical roots extending to the Seventeenth-century ***Querelle des anciens et des modernes***. Furthermore "modernism" and "realism" are incommensurable categories.[27] Such complexity, both historical and categorical, make it hard to discover exactly what is under dispute and precisely where the disagreement begins and ends. One could propose that Lukācs sets realism against modernism, whereas Adorno endorses modernism as realism. Given the complexity just mentioned, however, such a proposal would be abstract. It would need considerable elaboration to help us understand Adorno's disagreement. Let's begin instead with a summary of the two authors' conflicting descriptions of modernist and realist literature.

Lukācs distinguishes three main streams in twentieth-century literature; modernism, critical realism, and socialist realism. Representatives of the three streams would be Franz Kafka, Thomas Mann, and Maxim Gorky, respectively. We may simplify Lukācs' descriptions of these streams as follows. Modernist literature is bourgeois literature that is characterized by ahistorical angst in the face of monopoly capitalism.

critical realism, although ideologically bourgeois, is a literature of historical, sober optimism that does not reject socialism. Socialist realism is similarly historical and optimistic. Unlike critical realism. however, it uses a socialist perspective "to describe the forces working towards socialism *from the inside*" (RT 93/551). Whereas critical and socialist realism can form a common front against the cold War, modernism inadvertently supports the forces of destruction.

Adorno makes no secret of his hostility toward this mode of classification: "Operating reductively, imperiously distributing labels..., Lukács still behaves like a cultural commissar... No bearded Privy Councillor could pontificate about art in a manner more alien to it" (RD 153/253-254). Instead of exposing Lukács' system at its foundations, Adorno subverts it case by case, with the following results. Works called "modernist" by Lukács are touted by Adorno as genulnely realistic works, in the sense that they provide "negative knowledge" of sociohistorical reality (RD 158-161/259-262). The supposed "worldlessness" of modern art, for example, is the dialectical truth about socially induced alienation (RD 160-161/262). Works classified as "critical realisti" Adorno claims to be less "realist" and more "modernist" than Lukács thinks (RD 163/265, 171-172/273-274). Adorno's comments on Thomas Mann are a case in point. Rather than rejecting the subjectivizing of time, as Lukács argues, Mann's *The Magic Mountain* maintains ambivalence between objective and subjective concepts of time, according to Adorno. Towards so-called "socialist realism" Adorno's tactic is less indirect. He says socialist realist works are historically out of date and technically regressive. Their regressiveness originates in backward social forces of production (RD 163-164/265-266). Indeed, the procedures of socialist realism, like those of Lukács' book, are ideological coverings for oppressive features in Soviet society (RD 175-176/278-279). In effect Adorno is declaring socialist realist works to be not only less modern but also less realistic than the "modernist" works that Lukács seems to reject. Adorno arrives at this dramatically different assessment not so much by challenging Lukács' classifications as by subverting the system of classification. He retains Lukácsian labels but shifts their usage and meaning.

This subversion adds semantic complications to the historical and categorical complexity described earlier. Lukác's tidy system seems shattered, his three labels replaced by Adorno's ever shifting usages.

Beneath the surface, however, we can find a consistent pattern to Adorno's disagreement over the relative merits of modernism and realism. He consistently refuses to address matters of worldview, and he repeatedly emphasizes formal or technical considerations. Before discussing the methodological bases for this pattern, let me illustrate its presence in Adorno's review. The illustration will expand our picture of the two authors' conflicting assessments of twentieth-century literature.

Adorno takes Lukács to task for misinterpreting modernist literature and, more broadly, modern art. Adorno rejects the claim, supposedly made by Lukács, that style, form, and technique are overemphasized in modernist works—that these are "formalist" works. Adorno replies that such features are constitutive of art as art. They are the means through which artistic objectivity is achieved. Lukács mistake is this : "Instead of recognizing the objective function of formal elements in the aesthetic import *(Gehalt)* of modern art, Lukács deliberately misinterprets them as accidents, as arbitrary ingredients added by the over-inflated subject" (RD 153/253). And just as in general Lukács misinterprets the formal elements in modern art, so in his specific evaluations Lukács ignores formal elements in favor of the "content" *(Stoff)* and the "message" of individual works (RD 172/274).

Although Adorno's comments on Lukács methods are often astute, one wonders whether Lukács claim about "formalisms" has been fully understood. Adorno fails to distinguish sufficiently between Lukács' opposition to formalist literary criticism and Lukács' actual assessment of formal features in modernist works of literature. The passage cited from ***Realism in Our Time*** (see RD 153/253) concerns formalist criticism. The passage says little about formalism in the works themselves. Lukács is insisting here that the literary critic's mode of classifcation not be derived from purely formal problems. By giving primary attention to purely formal problems the literary critic will ignore the specific character of the works and writers to be classified. The stylistic differences, say, between James Joyce and Thomas Mann, both of whom use ***monologue interieur,,*** are ones not merely of form or technique but fundamentally of literary worldviews. The literary critic must begin with the basic worldview ***(weltanschauliche Grundlage)*** rather than the formal or technical features of modernist literature (see RT 17-19/467-469). Given what this passage actually says, Adorno's objectien seems wide of the mark.

Perhaps it is Lukács' emphasis on worldview that provokes Adorno's subsequent charge of "subjectivism". Adorno says Lukács looks for meaning *(Sinn)* that has been "arbitrarily superimposed" on literary works instead of the meaning that emerges through their formal elements (RD 153/253). Yet it is not clear that this charge is accurate. In keeping with a methodological emphasis on worldview, Lukács open his assesment of modernism by describing and attacking its views of human beings, society, and history. These views have drastic consequences, some of which are formal. As a tendency unified at the level of worldview, modernism leads to the destruction of traditional forms and of "literary forms as such" (RT 45-46/499). Does this account look for meaning that has been arbitrarily superimposed on literary works ? It is hard to say, partly, because Adorno has ignored the concept of "worldview". Instead of elaborating his charge by examining this concept and its function in Lukács' book, Adorno simply repeats the charge under different guises. For example, according to Adorno, Lukács fails to see that modernist works have moved beyond their alleged solipsism (RD 160/262). Such blindness arises from Lukács' low esteem for literary technique and his emphasis on "perspective," which Lukács wishes to impose on works from outside (RD 161-164/263-265). A later passage on realism shows that Adorno's charge of "subjectivism" addresses Lukács entire book, not merely the sections on modernism. Part of Adorno's cure for Lukácsian subjectivism would be a heavier emphasis on objective... technical factors governing artistic production" (RD 173/275-276).

I think the pattern to Adorno's disagreement has been sufficiently illustrated. The pattern rests on at least two methodological categories, namely Lukács' concept of "worldview," which Adorno seems to ignore, and Adorno's concept of "technique," which Lukács seems not to share. Whereas Lukács dismisses modernism primarily because of its despairing worldview, Adorno dismisses socialist realism primarily because of its technical backwardness. Where as Lukács' key to realism is the worldview presented, Adorno's key is the technique employed. Neither author wishes to divorce what is presented from how it is presented. Both authors think that literary works perform cognitive and ideological roles in society. Nevertheless their assessments of twentieth-century literature conflict. A difference in methodological categories seems central to this

conflict. Examining the categories of worldview and technique should shed further light on the conflict, despite the complexities already noted in the concepts of "modernism" and "realism".

Worldview

There can be no mistaking the centrality of "worldview" *(Weltanschauung)* in Lukács' book. It is a concept he explains, continually uses, and repeatedly emphasizes. There can also be no mistaking Adorno s distaste for this concept. His review not only ignores Lukács' explanations but also mocks "perspective" *(Perspektive)*, a concept closely related to "worldview" (RD 153/253, 162-163/263-265). To understand the meaning and function of Lukács' concept we need to examine his own writings. Initially Adorno's review will be of little help.

It has been claimed, sometimes as a criticism, that in principle Lukács' approach to literature is that of German *Geistesgeschichte*.[28] With respect to his emphasis on worldview this claim is surely correct, and it indicates fundamental continuities from *The Theory of the Novel* to *Realism in Our Time*.[29] Yet the precise contours of Lukács' concept have a more recent history. They were forged in the 1930s when Lukács was developing a Marxist-Leninist aesthetic amid debates about expressionism and socialist realism. In this context "worldview" became what Nichols describes as "a concept underlying almost all of Lukácas' prescriptive, evaluative, and theoretical statements about literature."[30] "Worldview" turned into a central and complex category. It has three kinds of complexity in *Realism in Our Time*.

In the first place Lukács finds evidence of worldviews in many different literary contexts. Not only do authors, readers, and critics have worldviews, but also the worldview within the work need not coincide with that of the author or recipients. Even characters within a novel may have diverse worldviews; having a distinct worldview is a mark of profound characterization.[31] Because worldviews can be found on so many sides of the literary situation, the concept's meaning becomes multivalent and its usage complicated.

In the second place Lukács does not clearly specify the meaning of "worldview". He proposes to use the term not in a "strictly philosophical sense," which he does not define, but in a broad way

to indicate widely shared reactions to the main trends in recent world history. In this way he can speak of one worldview underlying the peace movment or underlying all contemporary realism, even though ne also notices many different worldviews in both movements.[32] Such a broad description allows for multiple meanings. At times "worldview" seems to indicate a philosophical ontology or anthropology (RT 19—21 / 469—472, 30—33 / 482—485). At other times basic experiences, attitudes towards life, or socio - political stances are intended (RT 34—37 / 486—490, 47—53 / 500—507, 70—82 526—541). At still other times "worldview" is nearly equated with the import (*Gehalt*) of a literary work (RT 47—53 / 500—507, 72—74 529—531, 82—92 / 541—550). Because the concept's general meaning is not clearly specified, several different definitions are possible. These may be incompatible with one another.

Consequently, in the third place, Lukács's usage of the concept is complicated. Variety of occurrences and multivalence of meaning make it difficult to detect reliable criteria of application. Three problems here are 1) how worldviews align themselves with literary works; 2) how worldviews are connected with other sociohistorical phenomena; and 3) what is being criticized, the absence or the incorrectness of a particular worldview. In view of such complexity, I now propose to reconstruct parts of the book's argument. Doing this will enable us to determine the methodological significance of "worldview" while observing it in limited operation.

Lukács's stated aim is to criticize modernism in order to uncover contemporary possibilities for critical realism. his method is to contrast these literary trends with respcet to decisive "worldview-artistic problems" (RT 17/467). The hyphenated adjective (*weltanschaulich-kuenstlerisch*) already indicates that, no matter how worldview and artistry are related, in this book they belong together. For the Lukácsian critic formal considerations must flow from worldview concerns. The fundamental principles at stake in contemporary bourgeois literature are ones of worldview, not of mere technique. In a proper contrast between modernism and critical realism, questions of worldview must take precedence over ones of form (RT 17-19/467-469).

Much later Lukács proposes a method for analyzing the perspective in bourgeois literature (RT 59-71 / 514-528). First he claims that the crucial difference in perspective is whether or not socialism is rejected. Then he provides brief analyses of several works. The method of such analyses depends, he says, on examining "the mutual relation between world view and artistic configuration *(Gestaltung)*." Here "worldview" signifies both 1) how the writer "consciously formulates" a stance toward problems of life and society and 2) how the writer gives these matters configuration *(gestaltet)* "instinctively and with artistic consciousness." Lukács adds that "profound contradictions" can obtain between the consicious formulation and the artistic expression(RT 71/528). For convenience let me label these two matters "worldview-1" and "worldview-2". Worldview-1 is the writers consciously formulated views, for example a writer's opinions on an upcoming election as these are stated in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*. Worleview-2 is the stance artistically presented in the literary work, such as a novel's general attitude toward current electoral processes. Presumably Lukács' method would involve careful comparisons among worldview-1, worldview-2, and the total work under study.

Similar distinctions support Lukács' earlier claim that the fundamental differences between Joycean and Mannian styles lie in the "literary worldview" intended. The fundamental differences are ones of "intention," he writes (RT 19/469). Lukács says an intention is what takes shape in a literary work. The works intention need not coincide with the author's conscious intent or with the author's opinion about the work. The distinction implied here between intention and intent seems to resemble the one between worldview-2 and worldview-1. This resemblance becomes clearer in Lukács' subsequent elaboration of "literary worldview" *(dichterische Weltanschauung)*. He describes this concept with three cumulative phrases. The first phrase, "the world picture *(Weitbild)* in the work," corresponds to the intention that takes shape or worldview-2. Let's call this the worldview In the work. The second phrase, "the writer's position toward this vision...about reality", covers the author's intent and conscious views and corresponds to worldview-1. Let's call this the worldview of the writer. To these phrases Lukács adds a third : "the evaluation of the world picture grasped in this manner" (RT 19/469). Whose evaluation we are not told. It could be the writer's evaluation, in which case the second

and third descriptive phrases overlap. Or the evaluation could be the critic's stance toward the work, the critic's effort at bringing out the worldview of the work. In this case we could distinguish "worldview-3," the critic's stance. The most likely possibility, in my opinion, is that the evaluation in question includes both the writer's and the critics. This possibility would help explain the ease with which Lukācs uses non-literary statements by authors and critics alike to support his analyses of the worldview in modernist works. In any case a "literary worldview" includes all the elements indicated by Lukācs three phrases.

In addition, a literary worldview is the "essence" of a Work's "final import" (*Wesen des letzten Gehalts*), and a work's form is "the specific form of this specific import" (RT 19/469). Lukācs' emphasis on worldview rather than on form or technique is a matter of priority rather than exclusion. Critics must not ignore form or technique, but they cannot properly understand a form unless they grasp it as the form of a literary import whose crux is a literary worldview. For Lukācs the contrast between modernism and critical realism rests on literary worldviews. These contain both the world-view in literary works and the worldview of literary authors. The worldview of literary critics might also be included.

Adorno's review dsoe not directly challenge Lukācs' concept of a literary worldview. Nor does Adorno explicitly criticize Lukācs' account of relations among worldview, import, and form. Instead, as we have seen, Adorno repeatedly charges Lukācs with ignoring form or technique, overemphasizing the message or subject-matter, imposing meaning on literary works, and failing to reach their true import (*Wahrheitsgehalt*). Adorno does not argue that "worldview" should not be methodologically central, or that making it central must entail inattention to formal features, or that Lukācs methods are inconsistent with his methodology. Although Adorno hits some of Lukācs actual interpretations, he fails to reach the central category in which they are anchored.

This failure puts Adorno in an awkward position, for his own categories look rather Lukācsian. Simply by inserting the category of worldview Lukācs could easily endorse many points that Adorno intends as criticisms. Adorno insists that the critic recognize

the "objective function" of formal elements in a work's "aesthetic import" (RD 153/253), Lukācs would agree, provided one sees a literary worldview as the crux of the work's import. Adorno says this import is not real in the same sense as social reality is; art's task is to image the essence *(Wesen)* of social realities (RD 159-160/260-261). Again Lukacs could concur : literary import is specifically literary, and a work's 'reflection" *(Wiederspiegelung)* is of social reality's essence *(Wesen)*, not of of surface phenomena *(Erscheinungen);* but of course, Lukācs would add, a literary worldview should guide the interpretation of a works reflection. Furthermore, just as Adorno thinks formal artistic laws are crucial to art's imaging, so Lukācs sees them as crucial to art's reflecting. Adorno seems to be shadowboxing at the methodological level,

At this point we might decide that the entire dispute hinges on different literary preferences, which have their own ideological and political-economic supports. Yet such a decision would be premature. What Lukācs means by "import" conflicts with Adornos meaning, and Adorno's understanding of artistics forms does not match Lukācs understanding. Let me begin to indicate these differences by reconstructing another part of Lukācs' argument.

We have seen that for Lukācs a literary worldview comprises the worldview in a literary work, the worldview of the writer, and perhaps that of the critic. A literary worldview is the crux of the import of a literary work. At the center of such import in contemporary literature, he continues, lies a view of humanity (RT 19-21/469-472). Are human beings essentially social and historical beings, as Aristotle suggests ? Or are they essentially asocial, ahistorical, solitary individuals thrown into being, as Heidegger supposedly claims? The contrast between realism and modernism boils down to a contrast between these two views, according to Lukācs. The second view characterizes modernist writers and works. This view of humanity "must make itself felt in a special way in all areas of artistic configuration, and it must profoundly influence all principles of literary form" (RT 21/472). The rest of Chapter One describes the ramifications of existentialist anthropology in modernist works : dissolution of personality and of reality (RT 21-28/472-479); emphasis on pathology and distortion (28-33/479-485); a lack of perspective (33-40/485-492); and the prevalence of a allegory (40-46/492-499).

The three features just described help deflect some of Adorno's objections. Adorno says, for example, that Lukács should not expect individuals to overcome social isolation by adopting a different stance (RD 162/263-264, 165/267). Here Adorno ignores not only Lukács' attempt to locate the emphasis on isolation in a literary worldview but also his claim that such isolation arises from sociohistorical conditions, and his specific worry that modernist import and forms fail to expose these conditions. At the same time the three features of Lukács' argument serve to indicate differences between Lukácsian and Adornian categories. For Lukács the import of modernist works has at its heart an incorrect view of humanity. This literary worldview has profound formal ramifications. But for Adorno the import of modernist works does not have any worldview at its heart. Nor does he consider import to be "form-determinative" (RT 19/469). Part of the dispute about the merits of modernism stems from incompatible methodologies. Although seeming to share categories such as import and form, Lukács and Adorno construe these categories differently because of contrasting emphases on worldview and technique. The contrast can be made clearer by considering Adorno's concept of "technique," which informs his charges of Lukácsian blindness to formal considerations.

Technique

According to Adorno's book on Wagner, "the key to any and every artistic import lies in artistic technique,"[33] Adorno elaborates this claim in his ***Aesthetic Theory***. After positing a "dialectical relation" between import ***(Gehalt)*** and technique ***(Technik)***, Adorno writes that technique is of "key importance" for interpreting art. "Technique alone guides the reflective person into the inner core of art works, provided of course he also speaks their language." Although there is more to art than technique, "substance ***(Gehalt)*** can ***(only)*** be extrapolated from the concrete application of technique."[34] Adorno conceives of literary technique as something from which critics must elicit the import of a work. Technique is a central category in his literary-critical methodology.

Lukács shares neither Adorno's concept of technique nor his emphasis on it. Lukács own approach to "technique" is implicit in his parenthetical distinction between "inner artistic form" and "technical

form" (RT 53/507). An explicit statement occurs in his 1954 article on "Art and Objective Truth."[35] There Lukács objects to the tendency to identify technique and form, a tendency which he considers bourgeois and subjectivistic. Technique is the artist's acquired ability to realize artistic ends. It is *merely* "a means for expressing the reflection of reality through the alternating conversion *(gegenseitige Umschlagen ineinander)* of content *(Inhalt)* and form." Far from giving the critic a key to artistic import, technique itself can be correctly understood only in its dependence on the dialectical nexus of reality, content, and form. Interpreters who isolate technique remove it from the "objective problems of art." Interpreters who emphasize technique obscure the more profound problems of artistic form.[36] Perhaps, then, we may summarize as follows. Whereas an Adornian critic would try to elicit a work's import from its technique a Lukácsian critic would try to explain how a technique is determined by the work's import and by problems of content and form. The Lukácsian critic would give lower priority to technical matters. In fact Lukács easily draws lines between "essential problems of art" and "technical details of artistic technique."[37]

Lukács' approach to "technique" helps clarify the contrast he finds between two uses of *monologue interieur*. For James Joyce, says Lukács, this is not merely a literary technique but the "inner form" of his work. For Thomas Mann, however, *monologue interieur* is a mere technique, one whose use is governed by formal principles of the traditional epic (RT 17-18/467-468). For Lukács himself, Mann's use is of the proper kind, since Mann does not inflate a mere technique into an essential form. Lukács seems to assume that what is proper for the Lukácsian critic is also proper for the literary artist. For Adorno, however, Lukács' approach to technique is reactionary. It amounts to "nullifying the development of the technical forces of production and canonically reinstating older forms that are intrinsically outdated" (RD 162/264).

Adorno's objection here implies not only a different approach to technique but also a nonLukácsian concept of "form". Two traits of this concept bear directly on the question of technique. In the first place, Adorno views artistic forms as techniques that have solidified at a certain stage in the development of artistic materials. Form, he says, is "the imprint of the human hand in an art work." Form is "the mark of social

labour.[38] Although Adorno distinguishes form from technique, he sees much greater continuity between them than Lukács does. In the second place, Adorno thinks problems of form inhere in artistic materials as these develop, and he discusses such problems in terms of the "logic" of individual works.[39] Lukács, by contrast, thinks problems of form are inherited from traditional genres and styles, and he discusses such problems in terms of the real "lawfulness" *(Gesetzmaessigkeit)* that is reflected by forms. Consequently Lukács has much less enthusiasm for formal experimentation. Adorno calls form a "sedimentation" of content, thus implying that as society changes so artistic materials, techniques, and forms must also change. Lukács calls form the "highest abstraction" of content, thus implying that as the laws of reality remain valid over long stretches of history so do the appropriate artistic forms, which must govern the use of techniques.[40] For Adorno formal innovation is a liberating productive force in critique of the dominant mode of production. For Lukács traditional forms are valid ways of reflecting the dominant mode of production.

Such differences concerning technique and form spill over into the category of "import". The critic who elicits literary import from a work's technique is doing something different from the critic who shows that a work's import essentially determines the work's form and thereby also its technique. This difference in literary-critical methods is anchored in two different concepts of "import". Both concepts concern the manner in which works present social reality, and both concepts provide overarching standards of literary criticism. Yet the two concepts are incompatible. Perhaps their incompatibility can best be seen by describing the theory of artistic production that each concept implies. Adorno's category of "import" implies that the artist's social experience, which is primarily unconscious, interacts with artistic materials and techniques. If the experience is sufficiently deep, and if the materials and techniques are suffiently advanced, then works will result whose import penetrates the reified facades of contemporary society.[41] Lukács' category implies that the artist's social consciousness avails itself of various forms. If this consciousness is sufficiently correct, and if the forms are sufficiently lawful and appropriate, then works will result whose import properly reflects the essence of reified life in contemporary society. Adorno's category of "import" implies very little about the conscious ideology of

the author. Lukācs, however, leaves little doubt that the correctness or in correctness of social consciousness is a matter of explicit stances. Even though he emphasizes the worldview in the work, his entire approach makes central to import the writer's conscious views—"worldview-1" or the worldview of the writer.

Here very few changes occur between Lukācs' articles in the 1930s and *Realism in Our Time*, The following passage from "Narrate or Describe ?" could easily have been repeated in Lukācs' account of contemporary realism :

> A writer's worldview is merely the synthesized total of the writer's experiences, raised to a certain level of generalization. For the writer the significance of worldview is ... that, as the basis of correct feelings and correct thinking, a worldview provides the basis for correct writing ...
>
> Without a worldview a writer cannot narrate correctly, cannot contruct a correct, well-organized, multifaceted, and comprehensive epic composition.[42]

This emphasis on the writer's worldview helps generate the scarcely veiled threat when Lukācs says the persisten use of nonrealistic techniques has deep roots in the lives of certain Soviet writers. Having a correct worldview suddenly becomes a matter of life and death.[43] For the Lukācsian critic the writer's worldview seems to be the most important component in a literary worldview, which itself is the key to interpreting literary import and all other literary phenomena.

Even if Lukācs did not consider the writer's worldview most important, however, his emphasis on literary worldview would generate a problematic approach to literary import. Adorno registers some of the problems without pinpointing their source. By eliciting import from technique in his own literary criticism, Adorno offers a partial correction to Lukācsian methods. By emphasizing technique in his critique of Lukācs, however, Adorno obscures the methodological source of problems in Lukācs' approach to literary import. These problems do not result from Lukācsian blindness to form or technique. Instead they stem from what Adorno vaguely identifies as inadvertent subjectivism (RD 153/253). More precisely put, the main difficulties arise from a double expectation that literary import originates in the knowing subject and that this subject

provides the key to interpreting literary import. We could label this expectation a version of epistemic subjectivism. By "epistemic subjectivism" is meant a position that locates the ultimate source of "meaning," literary or otherwise, in the human knower. This knower, this epistemic subject, may be either individual or collective. In literary theory this subject may be the author, the reader, or the critic.

It is not entirely clear which of these epistemic subjects is central for Lukács. I have suggested that the central subject might be the writer's correct or incorrect social consciousness, but Steven Nichols claims that the critic has been made central. He faults Lukács for abandoning "all attempt to recapture any meaning other than what the critic's perspective brings to the work."[44] Adorno's change of "subjectivism" seems to imply that Lukács overemphasizes both the critic's perspective and the writers's social consciousness. Despite unclarity about which epistemic subject is central, however, it does seem clear that Lukács locates the ultimate source of literary import in the human knower. Literary import originates in subjective worldviews, and mediated by literary works, subjectiye worldviews provide the key to interpreting literary import.

A methodology centered on the category of "worldview" probably cannot avoid problems connected with epistemic subjectivism. The history and meaning of this category make such a supposition plausible.[45] The notion of worldview is a nineteenth-century concept. First coined in passing by Immanuel Kant, it gained currency among German Idealists and Romantics. By the 1840s it had become common in the vocabulary of educated Germans. In the two decades surrounding the turn of the century "worldview" became the topic of widespread philosophical debate, with Windelband, Dilthey, Rickert, and Husserl participating. The concept had already figured on botn sides of the debate between Eugen Duehring and Friedrich Engels. Later it became part of the standard vocabulary among Marxist-Leninists. Despite historical variations, "worldview" has generally meant a global outlook providing orientation for life and thought. This meaning reflects an age in search of integrality and purpose such as were no longer provided either by science or by art, religion, and philosophy, the erstwhile "forms of absolute spirit" (Hegel). Lukács pre-Marxist life and writings belonged

to this age. Marxist-Leninism's emphasis on worldview made it easy for Lukács to transfer connotations of the nineteenth-century search into his Marxist-Leninist aesthetics. The category of worldview aided this transfer. The category embodies a nineteenth-century expectation that meaning can ultimately be found in the epistemic subject, specifically in the subject's global outlook.

Adorno does not share this expectation. In fact his concept of technique can be seen as a typical twentieth-century concept, and his emphasis on technique can be read as a rejection of any attempt to locate the ultimate source of meaning in the epistemic subject. Thus it is surprising that Adorno's own aesthetics displays problems similar to those in Lukács' approach to literary import. This fact should make us wary of straightforward solutions. Nevertheless I should like to describe some problems in Lukács' methodology and propose solutions that respect the main concerns of *Realism in Our Time*.

Problems and Proposals

Three problems stand out in Lukács' emphasis on literary worldviews and his approach to literary import. 1) Insufficient attention is given to how a work's import is connected with its actual social functions. 2) Historiographic judgments become schematic and vague. 3) Diverse criteria of evaluation are reduced to mere marks of subjective worldviews. Admittedly this list is itself schematic and vague; it should be documented in detail. Given the uneven reception of *Realism in Our Time*, however, I think a related task is more urgent, namely a critical appropriation of Lukács' methodology. I intend to propose the beginnings of such an appropriation. My proposals will address the three problems just listed, but I hope to avoid similar problems in Adorno's aesthetics.

1. As I have tried to show, there is a methodological basis to the dispute between Lukács and Adorno over the relative merits of realism and modernism. This basis can be seen in conflicting emphases on worldview and technique, emphases that entail different approaches to import and form. At bottom the dispute and its basis concern the ways

in which authentic, autonomous works of literature give us knowledge of the sociohistorical totality. That some works provide this knowledge, and that doing so is a primary task of art, are not points of disagreement between Lukács and Adorno. Nor are several related assumptions: that artistic autonomy is a precondition for such knowledge; that some works are authentic; and that there is a sociohistorical totality, however fragmentary its surface may seem. A complete assessment of the dispute would have to examine these shared assumptions and their links to a questionable totalizing of reification.[46] My own assessment will be more modest. It will focus first on the limits of ideology critique in the manner of Lukács and Adorno.

According to Dieter Kliche and Peter Bürger, the assumptions shared by Lukács and Adorno lead them to emphasize ideology critique at the expense of functional analysis. Both Lukács and Adorno look for import but overlook how literary works actually function in their institutional settings. Kliche argues that both authors restrict their attention to how supposedly authentic autonomous works disclose alienation and (possible) disalienation. This restriction does injustice to art's own "functional process of renewal and expansion.[47] Bürger makes a similar point. He claims that neither author says much about the functions of art works in the bourgeois institution of art. By "institution of art" Bürger means the conditions regulating commerce with works of a certain kind in a given society or social class. During the nineteenth century, he argues, the relative independence of bourgeois art from other social subsystems went had in hand in hand with the increasingly apolitical import of individual works. In the twentieth century, however, a "self-criticism" of bourgeois art has been provided by the historical avantgarde (primarily Dadaism, early Surrealism, and the Russian avant-garde after 1917). This self-criticism has shown bourgeois art to be a social institution whose principle has become tha social ineffectualness of autonomous works. Lukács and Adorno say little about functions because the doctrine of autonomy, which was central to the bourgeois institution of art, is also central to their aesthetic theories. Instead of analyzing institutional functions that decide a work's social effects or lack of effect, both authors are led by the doctrine of autonomy to derive such effects from the import of works in themselves. Ideology critique comes at the oxpense of functional analysis.[48]

Kliche and Bürger see correctly, I think, that a more functional approach must be provided in order to appropriate ideology critique *ā* la Lukācs and Adorno. But I would not want to lose fruitful insights when pruning ideology critique for functional analysis. There at least two ways in which pruning could go awry. The first would be to keep functional analysis separate from criticism of technique and import. Although ideology critique in the grand manner tends to ignore the specific functioning of the works criticized, purely functional analysis quickly loses its methodological justification. Functional analysis requires methods for determining which works deserve analysis. If such methods are not to become arbitrary, then attention must be given to the technical status and intrinsic importance of the works to be analyzed. Furthermore, as Adorno stresses, technique and import provide reliable clues to the institutional functions of various works. A second mistake, in my opinion, would be to eliminate dimensions of ideology critique that transcend the bourgeois institution of art in its current form. A strength of Lukācs methodology lies in its attempt to connect ideology critique with a more comprehensive social ontology and philosophy of history. Of course, one can hardly deny that Lukācs' actual literary criticism often overshoots the mark. Without the attempt to make broader connections, however, both ideology critique and functional analysis might well become systematically crippled and historically short-sighted. A special strength of Adorno's approach is its attentiveness to the culture industry. In fact he has provided significant functional analyses of so-called popular art. Without such attention to this dominant institution the functions of bourgeois works might be misread. In addition there might be no adequate theory for indigenous and transitional artforms outside the .immediate orbit of late capitalism. Despite the limitations of what Lukācs and Adorno have achieved, functional analysis should not be separated from ideology critique, nor should the breadth of such critique be abandoned.

2. The breadth of *.Realism in Our Time* may be seen in its concern for the direction and historical significance of contemporary literature. Pressure for political effectiveness has not curtailed this concern, nor has the relativism of specialists deterred Lukācs from mapping large sociohistorical trends and patterns. The Hegelian sweep of his approach turns up important insights. Nevertheless his central category needs to be recast. "Worldview" cannot bea sensitive historiographic barometer,

for it awkwardly fuses three different scales of measurement. The first scale provides a periodization, a way of delimiting large-scale events or processes that do not recur. The second points to typical traditions of praxis, to which belong typical views about life and society. These traditions might span distinct historical periods. The third scale registers the historical significance of specific contributions within a sociocultural institution. One example of Lukács' fusion occurs in his account of critical realism. He identifies critical realism in three different ways without noting the different kinds of judgments he is making. Critical realism is a unique and potentially broad stream of twentieth century literature. It is also a continuous literary tradition dating from the early nineteenth century. And it is a more or less normative contribution within contemporary bourgeois literature. Such fusing of distinct sorts of judgments underlies not only the much-maligned "conservatism" of Lukácsian criticism but also the imprecision of his historiographic method.

If the fusion were dissolved, "worldview" could no longer be the umbrella under which all historiographic judgments are squeezed. If distinct elaborations were given to the three scales of measurement, as Calvin Seerveld has proposed,[49] then more precise historiographic judgments would be facilitated. Seerveld argues that historians of art and literature should distinguish synchronic periods, "perchronic" worldviews, and diachronic styles. This distinction would permit comparative judgments about the "current milieu," traditional matrix, and "eventful import" of artistic phenomena.[50] Within a carefully delimited period the historian could note many distinct worldviews having traditional antecedents. The historian could also assess specific contributions within that period without prejudging their alignment with distinct worldviews. If properly linked with technical criticism and functional analysis, such a multidimensional historiography could encourage comprehensive approaches with considerable flexibility and precision. These would be fruitful continuations of Lukács' contributions. His global classifications and assessments would become more tentative and exact, as Adorno wished them to be, but Lukács', concern for the human future would not immigrate to the "Grand Hotel Abyss"[51] where in comfort the night is observed in which all cows are gray.

3. The concerns of ideology critique are inescapably normative. The troubled genius of Lukács and Adorno has been a refusal to

divorce artistic norms from the larger sociohistorical process. I say "troubled" because this refusal has helped generate serious difficulties. Emphasizing worldview, Lukács tends to derive other norms from that of ideological correctness. This tendency supports an obvious depreciation of the import, form, and technique of "modernist" works. In addition, Lukács' system of classifying literature cannot help being broader than is warranted by real differences among works even at the ideological level. Adorno, for his part, also tends to have an overriding norm, despite his more evident striving for finely-tuned evaluations. Emphasizing technique, Adorno tends to derive other norms from that of technical progressiveness. This tendency supports an obvious depreciation of "realist" forms as well as a remarkable exaggerating of the political effectiveness of "modernist" works. Furthermore, Adorno provides nothing close to the classifications warranted by continuities and patterns even at the level of technique. He gives us unrepeatable, exemplary treatments of preselected works

Such tendencies might incline one to dismiss normative aesthetics altogether. This is in fact what Peter Bürger seems to have done. According to Bürger, Lukács and Adorno posit norms that are tied to artistic autonomy. But an attack on autonomy by the historical avant-garde has made it impossible to posit valid norms for works of art. Being bound to the development of art itself, post-avant-garde aesthetics must move from normative critique to functional analysis.[52] Bürger seems to have dismissed the labor of normative aesthetics by radicalizing the connection between artistic norms and the sociohistorical process. This dismissal is peculiar, however, because it relies on another type of norm, namely that of historical effectiveness. One could question, of course, whether the historical avant-garde actually did destroy the possibility of positing valid norms for works of art. Even if the attack was effective, there would be no obvious reason why the historical effectiveness of a specific artistic movement should be taken as the norm whereby normative aesthetics is invalidated.

More fruitful than dismissing normative aesthetics, it seems to me, would be to develop a more complex constellation of norms than Lukács or Adorno provides. Perhaps the historical avant-garde has inadvertently helped make possible normative complexity rather than simple

anormativity. I envisage evaluations that employ a variety of norms without deriving these from one another. Such norms could include technical innovativeness, formal depth, aesthetic originality, social importance, and political effectiveness. Tentative judgments concerning historical significance could also be made, but always in conjunction with evaluations according to a wide variety of norms. A similar condition would be placed on judgments concerning the direction in which a work or tendency is headed. An aesthetic theory would have the task of spelling out the contents of such norms.

If this were done in connection with specifc analyses of literary and artistic phenomena, and if no one norm were made original or overriding, then we could circumvent some of the problems noted earlier. Certainly one style, movement, or type of work could no longer be made the standard whereby all others are found deficient. A work with formal depth, for example, could be judged historically insignificant. So too, a technically innovative work could be deemed politically ineffective. Along with functional analysis and multidimensional historiography, complex normativity in aesthetics could help us appropriate the contributions of Lukãcs and Adorno Their monolithic criticisms of "modernism" and "realism" would be shattered, but the thrust of their critiques could be maintained.

Notes and References

1. Georg Lukãcs, *Realism in Our Time : Literature and the Class Struggle*, trans. John and Necke Mander, Preface by George Steiner (New York : Harper & Row, 1964); first published under the title *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (London: Merlin Press, 1962). The book originated in lectures given at the Deutsche Akademie der Kuenste in January 1956 and repeated several times in Poland, Italy, and Austria. The book's German title—*Wider den missverstandenen Realismus* (Hamburg: Claassen Verlag, 1958)—has been replaced with the original title—"Die Gegenwartsbedeutung des kritischen Realism"—in Georg Lukãcs, *Essays ueber Realismus, Probleme des Realismus I, Werke*, Vol. 4 (Neuwied: Luchterhand,

1971), pp. 457-603. Internal citations will be from *Realism in Our Time*, followed by the pagination in *Georg Lukács Werke*, Vol. 4. thus: (RT 17/467). The translation, which is unreliable, has been freely modified or replaced.

2. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Lukács Symposium held in Montreal on October 10-12, 1985. I wish to thank Calvin Seerveld and Nicholas Wolterstorff for their helpful comments and Bruce Voogd for his research assistance.

3. Ehrhard Bahr, "Die angelsaechsische Lukács-Renaissance. "*Text+Kritik*, no. 39/40 (October 1973), pp. 70-75.

4. In addition to *Studies in European Realism*, which was published in 1950, Bahr mentions the following translations: *The Historical Novel* (1962); *The Meaning of Contemporary Realism* (1962/1964); *Essays on Thomas Mann* (1964/1965); and *Goethe and His Age* (1968/1969). The first date in parenthesis indicates the British edition; the second indicates the American edition.

5. Literary and aesthetic writings translated in the early 1970s include *Solzhenitsyn* (1970/1971); *Writer and Critic, and Other Essays* (1970/1971; selected chapters from *Probleme des Realismus*); and *The Theory of the Novel* (1971). For two divergent assessments in the early 1970s of Lukács' life and work see George Lichtheim, Lukács (London: Fontana/Collins, 1970) and Ehrhard Bahr and Ruth Goldschmidt Kunzer, *Georg Lukács* (New York: Frederick Ungar, (1972). Two more recent accounts are by G.H R. Parkinson, *Georg Lukács* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) and Michael Löwy, *Georg Lukács: From Romanticism to Bolshevism*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: New Left Books, 1979)

6. Two other translations important for understanding Lukács'aesthetics are *Soul and Form* (1974) and *Essays on Realism* 1980/1981; additional chapters from *Probleme des Realismus*). Two partial translations from Lukács' aesthetics have appeared in *The New Hungarian Quarterly* (NHQ): "Introduction to a Monograph on Aesthetics," NHQ, no. 14 (Summer 1964), pp. 57-72 (introductory chapter of *Aesthetik: Die Eigenart des Aesthetischen, Werke*, Vols. 11 and 12, 1963); and "The Philosophy of Art," NHQ no. 47 (Autumn 1972), pp. 57-87 (Chapter 1 of *Heidelberger Philosophie der Kunst, Werke*, Vol. 16, 1974).

7. Among books discussing Lukács' aesthetics, let me mention three. A

useful summary, albeit lacking critical focus, has been given by Béla Királyfalvi, *The Aesthetics of György Lukács* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975) An excellent historical-critical analysis is contained in Eugene Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism: An Historical Study of Lukács, Brecht, Benjamin and Adorno* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982). For a thorough discussion of *The Theory of the Novel* see J.M. Bernstein, *The Philosophy of the Novelr Lukács, Marxism, and the Dialectics of Form* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

8. Nevertheless some important articles have appeared, including several in G. H. R. Parkinson, ed., *Georg Lukács: The Man, His Work and His Ideas* (London: weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970). See also Agnes Heller, "Lukács's Aesthetics." *The New Hungarian Quarterly*, no. 24 (Winter 1966), pp. 84-94; Vera Maslow, Lukács' Man-Centered Aesthetics, *"Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 27 (June 1967): 542-552; Silvia Federici, "Notes on Lukács' Aesthetics," *Telos*, no. 11 (Spring 1972), pp. 141-151; Nicolae Tertulian, "Lukács' Aesthetics and Its Critics," *Telos*, no. 52 (Summer 1982), pp, 159 167; and Agnes Heller, "Lukács' Later Philosophy," in *Lukács Revalued* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1983); pp. 177-190.

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10. MaxRieser, Review of Lukács *Wider den missverstandenen Realismus, Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 21 (1962-1963): 219-220.

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12. George Lichtheim, "An Intellectual Disaster," *Encounter* 20 (May 1963) 5: 74-80.

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17. Susan Sontag, "The Literary Criticism of Georg Lukács," in *Against Interpretation, and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966), pp 82-92.

18. Peter Demetz, "The Uses of Lukács," *The Yale Review* 54 (Spring 1965): 435-440.

19. In addition to the review by Raymond Williams, see Jack Lindsay, "A Note on Georg Lukács," *Meanjin Quarterly* 23 (1964): 196-198; and Gerald Graff, 'Lukács in the American University," *New Hungarian Quarterly*, no. 47 (Autumn 1972), pp. 136-143.

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21. Stephen G. Nichols, Jr., "Georg Lukács: The Problems of Dialectical Criticism," *Contemporary Literature* 9 (1968): 349-366.

22. Andrew K. Kennedy. "Lukács and Modern Literature," *Critical Quarterly* 21 (Winter 1979) 4: 53-60.

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28. Cf. Steven D. Martinson, "'Wo die Wege sich scheiden': Georg Lukács' Case against Modernism," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 17 (1981): 1825.

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30. Nichols, p. 354.

31. As Nichols indicates, Lukács developed his approach to the world-views of literary characters in "Die intellektuelle Physiognomie des kuenstlerischen Gestaltens" (1936), *Werke* 4: 151-96; translatad, with omissions, as "The Intellectual Physiognomy in Characterization" in Georg Lukács, *Writer and Critic, and Other Essays*, ed. and trans. Arthur D. Kahn (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1970), pp. 149-188.

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36. *Werke* 4: 639-641; *Wiiter and Critic*, pp. 58-60. Cf. pp. 9-10 and 20-22 in the Preface to *Writer and Critic*.

37. *Werke* 4: 641: *Writer and Critic*, p. 60.

38. *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 207/216.

39. *Aesthetic Theory*, p. 203-210/211-219.

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43. See *Werke* 4: 234-242. This section has been omitted in *Write and Critic*.

44. Nichols, p. 361.

45. This summary of the history and meaning of "worldview" is based on two unpublished papers by Al Wolters, "'Weltanschauung "in the hlistory of Ideas. Preliminary Notes" and on the idea of Weltanschauung and Its Relation to Philosophy" (July 1985).

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R. B. Kitaj and Walter Benjamin

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The pairing of R. B. Kitaj, the American painter with Walter Benjamin, the German literary critic and philosopher, has often been only cursorily noted in contemporay art historical scholarship. There is a need to pursue the bond which Kitaj has found in the compelling figure of Benjamin. The artist discovered Benjamin's writings in the mid — sixties and in 1966 drew this pensive and sensitively modeled lithograph of the writer (fig. 1). Benjamin's insights and biography a source of inspiration to the artist. This study focuses upon kitaj's tributes to Benjamin as well as some of their closely related intellectual and personal ties.

R. B. Kitaj (b. 1932) is an ex — patriot who has lived in London since 1958. A graduate of the Royal College of Art in London, he has also studied at the Cooper Union Institute in New York City, the Akademie der Bildenden Kunste in Vienna and the Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art in Oxford. Kitaj, it is noteworthy, has recently been hailed as the "greatest living American painter"[1] by William Lieberman, curator of twentieth century art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. His pictures draw on history, literature, film, baseball, philosophy, social and political figures and issues. Robert Hughes, the art critic, has identified him as the "best history painter of our time."[2] Like Benjamin, his works often reflect his reading and book collecting habits as well as his study of leftist politics and contemporary violence.

Walter Benjamin (1892 — 1940) is considered to be the most important literary critic in the German language between the wars. His early study at the Thuringian Landerziehungsheim in Haubinda exposed him to the radical educational reformer Gustav Wyneken. Benj min took an active part in the youth movement influenced by the antiauthoritarian aspects of Wyneken's ideas, but later broke with Wyneken when the latter urged his followers to join the war effort. Benjamin studied philosophy in Freiburg and Berlin. In Munich he pursued the study of language, partly under the influence of Martin Buber, and at Bern he wrote his doctoral dissertation on Romantic art criticism. His philosophical

commentaries draw on Jewish mysticism, ethics, history, art, literature, drama, linguistics and political and social issue and motives. In the thirties Benjamin traveled extensively, partly a condition of his exile from Germany and worked as a literary journalist and literary critic first in the Weimar Republic and latter in Paris. It was during this time that he also became associated with the Frankfurt School, although his connection to it was never as formal as the other leading members. Most of his later writings centered on his major work, the Arcades project and reflected his increasing commitment to Marxism, whose ideas he interpreted in a highly personal way. His suicide in 1940, while trying to get into spain and away from the Nazi invasion of Paris. occurred in the context of ill health, cardiac ailment, and the refusal of Spanish guards to let him enter Spain.[3]

The examples provided here illustrate how some of Benjamin's conceptions have been absorbed by Kitaj into painterly form. The *Autumn of Central Paris (After Walter Benjamin* (1972-73) (fig. 2) is a commemorative icon for the philosopher. It expresses both personal and intellectual bonds Kitaj has found in the character of Benjamin. Benjamin appears with his high forehead wearing eyeglasses and holds a cigarette between his fingures as he converses in the center of a painted collage of varying types He holds court in this Impressionist — type setting with a tumbling cast of characters. Set under a mustard canopy a rather sad – looking pretty woman with a red hat on stares into the distance. She may be waiting, or looking, for someone. Her costume with its padded shoulders and lapels indicates the period of the late thirties as her mood seems to reflect the deep seated cultural malaise of the times. The glass shattered ruins behind her profile underline the horrors of the time as Paris fell in Autumn, 1940. At the very top of this pyramid the gray—smudged faced man permeates his gangster—like neighbor who may be a pimp. It is he who holds a cigarette with his black—gloved hand for the turquoise–faced prostitute. These three eyeless creatures are rebels within capitalist society.[4] With her floppy green hat, the prostitute was an issue of concern to Benjamin. He wrote of the exploitative and hypocritical treatment of these woman by bourgeois society.[5]

Amidst the brightly colored silkscreened looking surface, the heavy handed symbolism of the red worker with his pickaxe alludes to Benjamin's marxist beliefs as well as to the erosion of society he experienced in Europe of the late thirties. The image of the proletariat symbolically

and carefully portrayed by Kitaj under the protective position of Benjamin was based upon a bronze sculpture by Max Kalish (1891—1945). Kalish's laborers such as this *Road Worker* (fig 3) were on view at the Cleveland Museum of Art when Kitaj lived in Cleveland and took children's art classes there. With its virile full - bodied vigor and force, such figures as this *Road Worker* made Kalish's reputation as a sculptor who showed the dignity and heroism of the American laborer. Kitaj adapts an archetypal image of the heroic worker to represent Benjamin's concern for the class struggle.

An autobiographical reference seems likely in the man in the gray suit with the hearing aid whose profile is fused with that of Benjamin. The artist was advised to wear a hearing aid in the late sixties and has been doing so since the mid—seventies. Kitaj, it appears, empathizes with the literary critic on a personal level in that they share similar personal histories. Kitaj's stepfather, Dr. Walter Kitaj, a research chemist from Vienna, was fortunate to successfully flee Nazi oppression and emigrate to the United States, unlike Benjamin's tragic fate under the same fascism. Kitaj's recent oeuvre deals, among many topics, with the Holocaust. He has replaced in these canvases his former picture-making techniques with their aesthetic of conjoining, with powerful figures, allegorical emblems of the human condition, treated in expressive brushwork.[6]

Kitaj appended a text to the *Autumn of Central Paris (After Walter Benjamin)*. This system of footnotes, like a libretto, indicates further dimensions of his ties to Walter Benjamin. Although he had abandoned the union of text accompanying his paintings in the early sixties, he significantly returned to this practice for the Walter Benjamin canvas. Kitaj's text, like a huge caption in a newspaper, clarifies and supplements the painted image as he selected references derived primarliy from Benjamin's unfinished Arcades project.[7] Benjamin in his discussion of photography in his prophetic essay "The work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" elucidated on the meaninglessness of the image without the word.

> At the same time picture magazines begin to put of signposts for (the viewer) right ones or wrong ones, no matter. For the first time, captions have become obligatory. And it is clear

> that they have an altogether different character than the title of a painting. The directives which the captions give to those looking at pictures in illustrated magazines soon become even more explicit and more imperative in the film where the meaning of each single picture appears to be prescribed by the sequence of all preceding ones.

Kitaj must have recognized in Benjamin's writing, confirmation of his previous belief in this method of identification and co-ordination between text and image.

Benjamin's influential essay with his view of the educative role of mechanical reproduction seems appropriate to Kitaj who has been involved since the sixties in photographic materials and reproductions of all kinds. Particularly in his editions of graphics, he has recycled ready-made images by means of screenprints and lithographs which has made his art more generally available and popular.

The production and exhibition of his screenprints and lithographs parallels ideas foreshadowed by Benjamin in his 1936 essay. Kitaj, when he read the study, certainly understood Benjamin's thesis on the aura—destroying properties of the individuality of a work of art created by multiplication. Kitaj's works in print such as this screenprint *Go and Get Killed Comrade—We Need a Byron in the Movement* (1965) (fig. 4) demonstrates the new role of the artist and his technical art, an art with mechanical origins and aiming at mechanical reproduction, as Benjamin stated :

> that which withers in the age of mechanical reproduction is the aura of the work of art. This is a symptomatic process whose significance points beyond the realm of art. One might generalize by saying the technique of reproduction detaches the reproduced object from the domain of tradition. By making many reproductions it substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique existence. And in permitting the reproduction to meet the beholder or listener in his own particular situation, it reactivates the object reproduced.

Go and Get Killed Comrade—We need Byron in the Movement, a clear example of technical art as defined in Benjamin's visionary study, is one of Kitaj's many ironic comments on martyrs and heroes. This

screen-print is characterized by its hard-edge qualities and highly saturated enamel blues and greens, as popular in some of the canvases of the Minimalist artists of the sixties. Kitaj, with his knowledge of the power of mechanical images, carefully builds up a motif composed of ready-made materials.

Two photographs are used, that of a train and of a news photograph showing Hans and Sophie Scholl who were leaders of the famed anti-Nazi student group known as Die weisse Rose, one of the most courageous and moving of all Resistance groups. Kitaj utilizes the photos, the essential caption and a white rose from a seed catalogue, while the running figure parallel to the railroad tracks is an image partly based on a photograph of a new York stage production of Sartre's play *No Exit*. Not only does the iconography of this screenprint relate to Benjamin's plight during the last years of his life, but some of the potentials of the impact of mechanical reproduction he predicted are manifested here.

Another tribute to the conceptions of the philosopher, who Susan Sontag called "the last intellectual"[10], is Kitaj's *Arcades (After Walter Benjamin)* (1972-73) (fig. 5). The canvas has the comic-strip look typical of Pop Art. Kitaj, however, is not a doctrinaire follower of Pop Art with its singular allegiance to a specific popular style and subject matter (comic strip, soup can, billboard). Uninspired by the popular media, he is clearly fascinated, as will be demonstrated, by Benjamin's complexity of thought and style of expression. Based on Benjamin's uncompleted cultural study of nineteenth century Paris. his Arcades project, Kitaj presents his knowledge of Benjamin's love and analysis of the Baudelairean city. The canvas is composed like a painted puzzle in which portrait—like figures are precisely pieced into an all—over surface design. In this high key colored oil painting Kitaj portrays passersby and shoppers in the streets, Parisians leaving and entering the clear rationality of the classicized architecture of the arcades.

To convey the ambiance of the arcades with its people, goods and events which Benjamin watched for his originally planned five—part study, Kitaj has carefully presented a fragmentary glimpse. He has placed in the fore ground a chrome yellow—faced and costumed figure. The elegant stroller with his cigarette properly fitted in its holder is not, as may appear, a characterization of Benjamin.[11] In the middle plane such shoppers as the blue—haired lady with her red per od style trench

coat and the two other strollers in brown and black garb portray the pace and activities of consumer life Benjamin observed. He noted how the arcades and international expositions became show places for what the rich could buy or others longed to possess.

The arcades, Benjamin explained, were nineteenth century glass and iron constructions.[12] To suggest the light—filled atmosphere of these wonders of technology, in which the marble floors were lined with elegant shops, Kitaj placed light reflections on the right side of the painting. Next to the red—faced figure in a three—piece red suit, streaks of color reproduce prismatic light entering the arcades.

Benjamin used the term arcades to describe the phenomenon of modernity he found in these streets, shop windows, international exhibitions. He described, for example, the Paris World's Fair as a microcosm of the entire world of commodities. Ideally the exhibition of all of these commodities together would and their fragmentation. Yet, Benjamin recognized, fragmentation is exacerbated because world's fairs emphasized the individualistic acts of buying and selling rather than the more social act of meeting human needs. Benjamin analyzed this exacerbation in nineteenth century Parisian culture.[13]

The painting recalls Benjamin's study of the great metropolis. Kitaj portrays the arcades as a symbol of Benjamin's literary reminiscences of Paris, his daydreams, his observations of the city of pleasure with its commodities and its world exhibitions. As Benjamin strolled through the crowds, he gained insights from these kinds of subjects during his urban navigations. Kitaj considers himself also to be "a flaneur, a city walker, a city witness".[14]

Kitaj expresses his admiration for Benjamin in a number of revealing statements: "In the life and work and death of Benjamin, I found a parable and a real analogue to the very methods and ideas I had pursued in my own painting; a shifting urban complex of film—like fragmentation, an additive free—verse of an art..."[15]

Examination of another Kitaj painting, although one not dedicated to the philosopher, will further illuminate this filmic quality, this reflective sensibility the artist finds in Benjamin's writings. *Walter Lippmann* (1966) (fig. 6) with its montage—like effect of unrelated pairs of characters has astream—of—consciousness narrative. The figures and setting suggest a puzzling stage—like presence. A yellow—haired

Scandanavian looking woman climbing a ladder in the foreground and a loosely drawn man behind her in a great brown coat, drinking wine, are held in place by green neck slings. These bands may be symbolic references or metaphors to the pair's entrapment or to their condition of being puppet—like members of society. At the top of a short flight of stairs in the background there is a slightly evil, slightly challenging encounter between a trench—coated man in shadow and an attractive woman under bright electric light. Her white coat and his black coat serve as positive and negative figures in the encounter. The pair suggest perhaps romance, intrigue, spies. At the right margin Walter Lippman, name mis—spelled, looks on as the editorialist, journalist, critic of world events, watcher. He is the commentator of Kitaj's scene. Like the forceful use of rich imagery and citations in Benjamin's works, Kitaj's oblique motifs flow together. Kitaj attempts to create the sense of rupture of narrative and episodic excitement he finds in Benjamin's dialectical thought. Such paintings as *Autumn of Central Paris (After Walter Benjamin)*, *Arcades (After Walter Benjamin)*, and *Walter Lippmann* show Kitaj's admiration and emulation of the kind of literary—intellectual art he recognized in Benjamin's works.

Kitaj's attachment to the intellect, poetic sensibility, and life of Benjamin is further revealed in his essay for *The Human Clay*, a 1976 exhibition for which the artist was singularly chosen by the Arts Council of Great Britain to select paintings for a year—long travelling instalment. Kitaj significantly identifies his goals with Benjamin's. Perhaps in his statement he seeks both a similar independence of mind and a power to elicit thought in his art as he discovered in Benjamin's words. Kitaj in one of the major essays of his career as an artist, selects a quotation from Hannah Arendt's introductory essay in *Illuminations*. By citing her metaphor for Benjamin as "the pearl diver", he binds his mission to Benjamin's accomplishments.

> In Hannah Arendt's beautiful introduction to Benjamin, she likens that wonderful man to a pearl—diver who wrests what he can from the deep past, not to resuscitate the way it was and to contribute to the renewal of extinct ages, but because the rich and strange things he has found in the deep "sufter a sea change" and survive—in new form and shape. That is how I want to take human images to survive—as Arendt put it,

'... as though they waited only for the pearl diver who one day will come down to them and bring them up into the world of the living.'[16]

Kitaj's words and works, as discussed, provide testimony of the philosopher/literary critic as a source of inspiration to the artist by the insights he discovered in Benjamin's esoteric fragmented style of writing. His formulations, descriptions of economic and social phenomena, examples of the historical roles of art, literature and theatre to shed light on the present have encouraged Kitaj to attempt attainment of such brilliant portrayals of his own ideas and convictions in paint and graphics.

Further study of the relationship of the works of Kitaj and Benjamin would reveal how both men have taken literary images that appear distant and show their relation to our times. Parallels could drawn demonstrating the artist's and the philosopher's similar interests and careful observations of the disparate energies of the Surrealist movement. Kitaj has discovered in Benjamin's intellectually complex conceptions. his observations, his fragmentary, arcane style of expression, and his personal biography an affirming source of identification and confirmation of his goals for his art.

Notes and References

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Benjamin, Adorno, Surrealism

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There is little doubt that one of the more enduring aspects of Critical Theory has been its contribution to the field of aesthetics. This is a fact that has seemed baffling and irksome to those for whom the inordinate concentration on the aesthetic dimension in the work of thinkers such as Adorno, Benjamin, Lowenthal, and Marcuse cannot help but appear as the sublimated fulfilment of more deep-seated political urges—a form of *trsatz* praxis, as it were. Even the more intelligent and sensitive commentaries on Critical Theory that have appeared in recent years are not wholly free of the atavistic materialist suspicion that time spent away from the practical sphere is time ill-spent. Yet such attitudes risk becoming a "defeatism of reason"[1] in an era in which the applicability of the Marxian approach to changing the world has dot only been thrown into serious doubt, but in which that approach has become ideologically responsible for a historically new form of oppression.

At the same time, there can be little doubt that the aesthetic interest of Critical Theory retains an essential ***radical quality*** insofar as this interest is unfailingly wedded to questions of human emancipation. However, in this new frame of reference, such questions cease being reducible to the simplistic matter of changing the ownership of the means of production—the answer long associated with traditional socialist perspectives. Rather, they have become relevant to the ***transformation of life in its totality***, i. e., in its cultural, psychological, and everyday apsects, as well as its economic and political forms. Only a thoroughly reconstructed theoretical perspective would be capable of providing a frame work adequate to such radical and wide ranging needs; and it was precisely such a framework that Critical Theory sought to provide through its work in a variety of intellectual fields, not the least of which was the aesthetic.

The task of a systematic reconstruction of the aesthetics of Critical Theory would be an admirable and necessary subject of future research.[2] The present essay, focusing on the variegated links between two Critical Theoristis—Benjamin and Adorno—and surrealism, represents only a very partial step in this direction. At the same time, it is important to note that in an historical era in which social theory had become "social science," philosophy irredeemably scholastic, and in which objective prospects for social change were seemingly crushed beneath monolithic authoritarian and welfare state formations, Critical Theory increasingly turned to the aesthetic sphere as a unique repository of qualitiative difference, negation, and critique.

Benjamin once remarked : "My thought is related to theology like a blotter to ink. It is wholly soaked up by it, If it were left to the blotter, however, nothing would remain."[3] One could make an analogous claim concerning his innate attraction to surrealism. Indeed, the elective affinities between surrealist attitudes and Benjamin's characteristic mode of philosophizing account for one of the most fundamental motifs throughout his work.

Technically one must date Benjamin's itterest in surrealism from his 1925 reading of Andrē Breton's "Manifesto of Surrealism." In a letter to Rainer Maria Rilke of that year, Benjamin would write enthusiastically: "In particular what struck me about surrealism..was the captivating, authoritative, and definitive way in which language passes over into the world of dreams."[4] The following year Louis Aragon's *Le Paysan de Paris* appeared, a work that would provide the ultimate stumulus for Benjamin's celebrated *Passagenwerk* (Arcades Project), the uncompleted masterpiece of his later years. At a later date, Benjamin described his initial reaction to Aragon's book as follows: "at night in bed i could never read more than two or three pages at a time, for my heartbeat became so strong that i was forced to lay the book down.[5]

Unquestionably, it was in the execution—as fragmentary as it remained—of the *Passagenwerk* that Benjamin's passionate encounter with surrealism was put to its most significant—if at times controversial—employment. To this crucial episode in Benjamin's development we will return shortly. However, in the present context it is perhaps of equal importance to indicate that well before these momentous initial encounters. Benjamin's thought already inclined in surrealistic directions.

Despite the fact that in his early years (1916-1925) Benjamin displayed a primarily Germanistik focus (with the important exception of his interest in Baudelaire and Proust), what one might call proto-surrealist stirrings can be found in two significant works from this period: the 1918 essay "The Program of the Coming Philosophy" and the "Epistemo-Critical Prologue" to his 1925 *Trauerspiel* study (*The Origin of German Baroque Drama;* Benjamin's faild *Habilitationsschrift* eventually published in 1928).

At first glance it would seem inherently problematical to characterize "The Program of the Coming Philosophy" as Proto-surrealistic". The focus of the essay is a Kant-critique directed against the neo-Kantianism that had attained the status of a school-philosophy during Benjamin's university years (the later 1910s). The brunt of Benjamin's criticisms are directed against the concept of experience that a Kantian theory of knowledge yields, one Benjamin correctly identifies as deriving unambiguously from a mechanistic, Newtonian world-view, and which he mercilessly castigates as being "of inferior rank."[6] "That Kant could commence his immense work under the sign of the Enlightenment means that it was undertaken on the basis of an experience reduced to a nadir, to a minimum of signification, so to speak," Benjamin observes, with reference to the physicalist biases of high Enlightenment thought[7]. Lest there remain any doubt concerning Benjamin's pronounced antipathy to a Newtonian conception of experience, in which all is calculable, predictable, and law-like, Benjamin adds his conviction that this was "one of the most base experiences of views of the world."[8]

It is clear that what Benjamin found most objectionable about the remnants of a Newtonian, causalist perspective in Kant's theory of cognition was the resultant ontological separation between phenomenal and noumenal realms. Concerning the latter, according to kant, we could have no "knowledge" properly speaking: since the noumenal traescended the (Newtonian) bounds of experience, claims directed toward this sphere of being remained hollow and empty, ultimately succumbing to the folly of "dialectical illusion." Yet, this is precisely what Benjamin desired from a "theory of experience" that would be worthy of the name: access to noumenal truth; that is, contact with a form of knowledge/experience that would be transcendent vis-a-vis the preductable, law-like regularities of the prosaic phenomenal world. The latter world-view promoted a conception of existence that was statistical and mechanistic, hence "inferior" in Benjamin's eyes. Only what

he dubbed a "superior concept of experience"[9] would be capable of doing justice to the true dignity and worth of human existence and its higher capacities. As Benjamin remarks, "What the Enlightenment lacked was authorities, not in the sense of something to which one would have to submit uncritically, but rather as spiritual powers that would have been capable of providing experience with a *superior content*."[10]

The conclusion Benjamin draws from the youthful Kant-critique *prima facie* could not be more removed from surrealist consider attons : an authentically superior concept of experience must "render possible not only mechanical but also *religious experience*." However, if one isolates the key positive conception found in the essay—that of a "superior concept of experience"—the links with surrealism will seem less parochial. Indeed, the surrealists, too, sought to surmount the inherent narrowness of a Western rationalism which resulted in the prevalence of a thoroughly mundane and routinized cosmos. This rationalist spirit—or anti-spirit-had resulted in the unprecedented carnage of World War I, in which scientific knowledge had been applied to methods of mass annihilation on a previously unimaginable scale. Moreover, its killing sobrietv was responsible for the banishment of all mystery, romance, and transcendence from the center-stage of human existence, in favor of the bourgeois values of confromity, calculation, and profit. As Fredric Jameson has remarked, "Surrealism presents itself first and foremost as a reaction against the intellectualized, against *logic* in the widest sense of the word, subsuming not only philosophical rationality, but also the commonsense interests of the middle-class business world, and ultimately reality itself."[11]The surrealist revulsion towards the spirit of bourgeois rationalism can be seen clearly from such "a-rational" privileged surrealist media as automatic writiting, *l : hasard objectif*, and—of paramount importance for Benjamin—the realm of dream experience. As Andrē Breton would remark in his 1925 "Manifesto": "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are so seemingly contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a *surreality*, if one may so speak. It is in quest of this surreality that I am going."[12] Indeed, it was a similar quest for an "absolute reality" that motivated so much of Benjamin's youthfull literary activity.

The other moment of Bentamin's early development that may be described as incipiently surrealist was his theory of knowledge in the *Trauerspiel* book. Here, too, at first glance, cogent parallels would seem hard

to come by. Nothing could be more foreign to the surrealist enterprise than the construction of a theory of knowledge, a all too traditional philosophical undertaking. To be sure, a thorough discussion of the nermetic Prologue to Benjamin's *auerspiel* book would far transcend the scope of this essay and is a matter I have addressed at length elsewhere.[13] But there is little doubt that methodological basis of Benjamin's theory of knowledge is the principle of *montage :* an immediate juxtaposition of intrinsically unrelated elements: a principle that Peter Bürger has referred to as "the fundamental principle of avant-gardiste art."[14]

The key to understanding Benjamin's early theory of knowledge (which he considered to be "dialecticlal," if not yet "materialist") is the concept of "constellaticn." By regrouping material elements of phenomena—the objects of knowledge—in a philosophically informed constellation, Benjamin sought the emergence of an "Idea" through which the "redemption" of the phenomena would be effectuated—in-so far as contact with the "Idea" would facilitate their elevation to the homeland of unconditioned truth. In this admittedly recondite procedure, the function of conceptual (i. e., rational) knowledge is strictly delimited its sole task is to facilitate the *arrangement* of the phenomena or material elements in the constellation. As Benjamin asserts, "Conceptual distinctions are above all suspicion of destructive sophistry only when their purpose is the salvation of phenomena in ideas."[15] But the ultimate goal of this process, the emergence of the ideas themselves, is to be a product of the montage like juxtaposition of the material elements alone. It is not, strictly speaking, a result that is achieved by the employment of the traditional philosophical means of induction, deduction, or logical argumentation, if the latter nevertheless remain useful as auxiliary methods. To be sure, what Benjamin has in mind is something more akin to a momentary epihany, a sudden burst of insight, that he would later explicitly associate with his materialist version of the constellations of the *Trauerspiel* book, the "dialectical image." As Benjamin would say of the later : "The dialectical image is a flashing image. Thus, the past must be grasped as an image that flashes in the Now of recognition. Redemption, which is accomplished in this way and only in this way, can be attained only as that which in the next instant is already irredeemably lost."[16] As a *Jetztsein* or Now-time, the constellationor dialectical image approximates the neo-Platonic/theological notion of *nunc stans.* As defined by Franz Rosenzweg in *The Star of Redemption* (a work known to have influenced Benjamin) *nunc stans* signifies that

"mankind is redeemed from the transience of the moment" and the latter is "refashioned as the ever-persisting and thus intransient, as eternity."[17] The theological distinction between "historical time", prone to decay and disintegration *(Verfall)*, and "Messianic time", a time of permanent fulfillment, was indeed one of the most enduring motifs throughout Benjamin's lifework; it dates originally from a crucial 1916 fragment "Trauerspiel und Tragodie"[18] and pervades the 1940 "Theses on the Philosophy of History," where Benjamin speaks of the *Jetztzeit* as "shot through with clips of Messianic time," in contraposition to the empty and degraded, "homogeneous" time of the historical era.

Benjaminian constellations (also described at times as "monads") bear affinities with the surrealist search for transcendence (a "sur-reality"). As we first saw with reference to his 1918 Kant-critique, and again through his emphasis on a Messianic time of permanence and fulfillment, the secular bent of Benjamin's philosophy is throughout interspersed with theological residues of no small moment. Yet, if one observes carefully, it is apparent that Benjamin's search for transcendence transpires, like the surrealists, *within* the sphere of immanence. Hence, in his *Trauerspiel* book theory of ideas, the latter, while of ontologically superior value, remain, unlike the Platonic doctrine, *this-worldly* in origin. That is, they emerge spontaneously from the conceptually mediated arrangement of the phenomena themselves. In Benjamin's theory it is clear that ideas are denied an existence independent of the phenomenal being. This claim is crucial for it is the basis upon which he hopes to surmount "dualism". As he observes at one point : "For ideas are not represented in themselves, but society and exclusively in an arrangement of concrete elements in the concept : as the configuration (constellation) of these elements." He seeks to summarize the relationship between ideas and phenomena through use of the following bold, if characteristically elliptical metaphor : "ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars."[19] That is, neither ideas nor constellations exist independently of the material elements that comprise them, but instead first emerge therefrom.

One can only date the explicit emergence of surrealist motifs in Benjamin's work from the aphoristic *Einbahnstrasse* (1928) and the seminal "Surrealism" essay of a year later. With reference to the former, Bloch was quick to see in a 1928 review that the basic intention was "to render philosophy surrealistic."[20] He recalls that Benjamin reacted

favorably at a Berlin cafe when Bloch showed him a review which compared the book to a "store-opening, with the newest spring fashions in metaphysics in the display window."[21] Bloch noted further that Benjamin had consciously shunned a systematic, discursive means of presentation in favour of the surrealist-inspired principle of montage : "Surrealistic philosophy is exemplary as a montage of fragments that, however, remain pluralistic and unconnected."[22] In *Einbahnstrasse* Benjamin first formulated the methodological precepts that would define the construction of the *Passagenwerk*, whose initial composition occurred in these years. As Benjamin remarks in his notes for the *Passagenwerk:* "Method of this work : literary montag. I have nothing to say. Only to show. I will pilfer nothing valuable and appropriate for myself no clever formulations. Only rubbish and refuse, of which I will make no inventory; rather, I will allow them to come into their own in the only way possible : by employing them."[23] This methodological plan was the object of an extensive critique by Adorno, who feared the *Passagenwerk* in its entirety would ultimately be composed of a montage of citations, devoid of supporting commentary or interpretation. Support for this conviction is seemingly contained in the abovo quoted dictum, "I have nothing to say. Only to show."[24]

What was it above all that Benjamin prized about surrealism ? To begin with, rhe surrealist technique of montage seemed an ideal way of surmounting the staleness and convention of traditional, discursive philosophizing. It was a procedure more likely to yield sudden flashes of insight ("the dialectical image is a flashing image") rather than pre-calculated, deductive truths. In addition, the *imagistic* character of montage—e.g., in the thought-montages or colleges that comprise *Einbahn-strasse*-lends it greater affinities with the sensuous, objective side of truth—i.e., with the things themselves that truth seeks to grasp. Such a technique stands in oppositian to he typical philosophical emphasis on "conceptual" primacy and against the modern philosophical pre-eminence of the epistemological subject. Benjamin was vehemently opposed to such conventional philosophical practices, which he felt could never truly reach the "in itself" of phenomena.

Moreover, surrealistic modes of apprehension—above all, surrealism's unhesitating immersion in the concrete particularity of every-day life—seemed to harmonize especially well with Benjamin's own

partisanship for philosophical micrology : his conviction that the universal is not something that must be foisted upou the particular from on high, but rather must be gently coaxed from the latter of its own accord. To do otherwise would be merely to violate the delicate contours of particularity as such, to subject the latter insensitively to the abstract "will to power" of the conceptual sphere. Bloch has aptly commented on Behjamin's talents as a philosophical micrologist as follows : "Benjamin had what Lukacs so enormously lacked: he had a unique sense for the significant detail, for the near at hand, for the fresh elements which burst forth in thinking and the world, for singularities which are unsuitable for practical use and thus deserving of an entirely unique consideration, Benjamin possessed a peerless micrologicalphilosophical sense for such details, such significant signs of the off the beatentrack." [25]

Benjamin himself describes his methodological reliance to micrology and its relationship to montage in an important note to the ***Passagenwerk***, There, Benjamin grapples with the problem of how to reconcile a "heightened sense of telicity to the subject matter [***Anschaulichkeit***] "with the" Marxist understanding of history. "His conclusion : "The first step on this path will be to incorporate the principle of montage in the study of history. Thus, to construct the grandest edifices from the smallest, most precisely fabricated building-blocks. Thereby to discover the crystallization of the totality in the analysis of the small, individual elements." [26] Hence, the procedure of montage is designed both to surmount problems stemming from the abstract superimposition of "methed" on "material" (method here being the "Marxist understanding of history") as well as to facilitate greater ***Anschaulichkeit*** or fidelity to the being-in-itself of the subject matter. It is a technique that inclines intrinsically toward respect for the material rather than bromoting the abstract primacy of the concept. [27]

The enchanted, micrological transformation of fragments of everyday life was a quality of surrealism that Benjamin especially revered. In the letters referring to his 1929 "Surrealism" essay, Benjamin leaves no doubt concerning its fheoretical centrallty for the ***Passagenwerk***. At one point he refers to it as as "an apaque paravent in front of the Arcades study; "at another he speaks of it as a type of "prolegomenon to the Arcades project. "[28] The "Surrealism" essay, he says, represents an

attempt "to determine the most concrete qualities of an epoch as they present thsmselves here and there in children's games, a bullding, or one of life's random situations."[29] Not only was the essay to be about surrealism; it was itself supposed to be surrealist in spirit.

Benjamin praises the surrealists for their attempt to narrow the gap between art and life. As such, one of the movements most salutary features is its concerted assault on the bourgeois realm of ***belles-lettres***. It presents itself as a definitive challege to the illusionistic, other-worldly complacency of "art for art's sake"—which Benjamin describes as the "secular religion of art." He therefore praises Breton for "his intention of breaking with a praxis that presents the public with the literary precipitate of a certain form of existence while withholding that existence itself."[30] The ***promesoe de bonheur*** of bourgeois art should no longer be confined to the supramundane sphere of aesthetic illusion, but should instead be transferred to the plane of material life itself. As Breton declared : "Transform the world, Marx said; "change life" said Rimbaud. For us these two watchwords are one."[31] The writings of this circle had become bluff, demonstration and provocatian; they had thus ceased being works of art in the purist, affirmative sense. Yet, for the surrealists this transformed conception of the relationship between art and life-praxis meant that not only was art to be brought closer to the domain of real llfe, but also that shards of real life were to be absorbed within tne artistic process. Once transformed within the surrealist college, these shards, newly arranged, would produce inspired, "profane illuminations." In perhaps the most representative passage of the essay, Benjamin explains his veneration of the surrealist movement in the following terms : "The surrealists were the first to perceive the revolutionary energies that appear in the outmoded, : that appear in the first iron constructions, the first factory buildings, the earliest photos, the objects that have begun to ebb from them. The relation of these things to revolution—no one can have a more exact concept of it than these authors. No one before these vislonaries and augurs perceived how destitution—not only social, but architectonic, the poverty the interiors, enslaved and enslaving objects—can be suddenly transformed into revolutionary nihilism, Leaving aside Aragon's ***Passage de l'Opera***, Breton and Nadja are the lovers who convert everything we have experienced on mournful railway journeys (railways are

beginning to age), on God-forsaen Sunday afternoons in the proletarian quarters of great cities, in the first glance through the rain-blurred window of a new apartment, in to revolutionary experience, if not action. They bring the immense forces of 'atmosphere' concealed in these things to the point of explosion."[32] This "enchanted" relationship to the discrete phenomena of everyday life satisfied Benjamin's longstanding yearning for a "superior concept of experience. "Moreover, it possessed the potential political advantage of existing in profane, exoteric form.

Undoubtedly, one of the most crucial links between surrea lism and the Arcades Project stemmed from the former's emphasis on the superior experiential value of dream life. In his first manifesto Breton affirms the value of dreams to such an extent that he ultimately calls into question the conventional priority of waking over dream life. He observes, "Freud very rightly brought his critical faculties to bear upon the dream. It is, in fact, inadmissible that this considerable portion of psychic activity ...has still today been so grossly neglected. I have always been amazed at the way an ordinary observer lends credence and attaches much more importance to waking events than those in dreams."[33]

In Benjamin's work, too, dreams occupied a very special locus. For him dreams would become an autonomous source of knowledge and experience, a privileged key to the secrets and mysteries of waking life. In no uncertain terms, they became repositories of the utopian visions of numanity. Dreams provide a necessary sanctuary for the higher aspirations and desires of humanity, desires and aspirations that are systematically denied on the plane of material life. Adorno touches on this point when he observes that for Benjamin, "the dream becoms a medium of unregimented experience, a source of knwledge oppossd to the stale superficiality of thinking." In dreams, "the absura is preseuted as if it were self-evident, inorder to strip the self-evident of its power."[34] Dreams thus represent the realm of the possible, the non-identical; they serve to contest the pretension to "being-in-itself" of the dominan reality principle.

In an 1843 letler to A. Ruge, marx makes his famous observation that "the worla has long been dreaming of something of which it must only become conscious in order to possess it in reality—a saying

with which Benjamin was quite familiar and which he explicitly cites in the *Passagenwerk*.[35] indeed, the Marx cltation may be plausibly read as the theoretical germ-cell of the *Passagenwerk* in its entirety. The work's central methodological concerns are unamolguously contained in the following remarks by Benjamin bearing on the relationship between dreams, awakening, and the 19th centuly: "The attempt to awaken from a dream as the best example of dialectical transformation...The utilization of dream elements in awakening is the canon of dialectics...Capitalism was a natural phenomenon with which a new dream-sleep, containing a reacti vation of mythcial powers, came over Europe...The coming awakening stands iike the Greek wooden horse in the Troy of the dream...The collec-tlve expresses its conditions of life. In the dream it finds its expression and in awakening its interpretation...The critique of the 19th century must in a word begin here, Not with its mechanism and machinism, rather with its narcotic historicism its addiction to masks, in which however is hidden a sign of true historical existence that the surrealists were the first to grasp. The task of the present work is to decipher this sign. And the revolutionary, materialistic basis of surrealism is a sufficient guarantee of the fact that in the sign of true historical existence just mentioned, the economic base of the 19th century has attained its highest expression."[36]

Capitalism, as a "natural phenomenon," has unleashed a neo-mythological dreap-sleep over Europe, whose manifestations are the super-structural material elements of 19th century life first investigated by the surrealists (who, moreover, through their salutary investigations of the latter, have provided a guarantee of "true historical existence") and soon to become the privileged phenomena of analysis in Benjamin's own *Passagenwerk* : phenomena such as the arcades, fashion, the world exhibi-tions, the bourgeois interior, the streets of Paris, etc. The dream-sleep signifies not merely false consciousness, i.e., it is irreducible to the purely negative moment of objective delusion. Rather, it is simultaneously a repository of utopian potentials and wish-images that point in the direc-tion a meaningful historical existence. The latter of course will accrue to humanity—the "collective"—only with the moment cf historical awakening. The intention of the—inconsummata—*Passagenwerk* was nothing less than the redemption of the superstructural *Erscheinungs-formen* from their indigent, natural state through their reassemblage in a

surrealistically inspired montage; it was this procedure, and this procedure alone, that would release the utopian wish-images from their reified imprisonment in the fetishistic world of bourgeois cultural consumption. In this respect Rolf Tiedemannn makes the pertinent observation in his introduction to the *Passagenwerk* that "Benjamin attempted to do for the superstructure of capitalism what Marx did for the economic base."

At several points in the study, Benjamin insisted on the importance of the category of "ambiguity". "Ambiguity is the metaphorical *bildliche* appearance of the dialectic, the law of dialectic-at-a-standstill. This standstill is utopia and the dialectical image thus a dream-image."[37] The ambiguity lay precisely in the fact that the phantasmagorical image-sphere of the bourgeois cultural landscape can neither be conceived of strictly in terms of historical disintegration *Verfall* nor in terms of the modern theory of progress (upon which Benjamin heaps such scorn in konvolut N of the *Passagenwerk*. Rather the regressive and utopian potentials are inextricably interlaced and both moments are contained in the dialectical image. There is certainly little difficulty in making sense of this judgment from the standpoint of an orthodox Marxist lexicon. Marx always considered capitalism an "ambiguous" social formation, insofar as the development of objectively progressive forces of production was retarded by retrograde capitalist relations of production. Benjamin pays lip-service to this insight when he comments that in his chapter on commodity fetishism, Marx shows ,"how ambiguous the economic world of capitalism is—an ambiguity greatly enhanced by the intensification of the capitalist economy; this is very clear in the case of machines, which heighten exploitation instead of improving the lot of man."[38]

A detailed, lapidary summation of the methodological intentions of the project as a whole is provided in the following crucial remarks: "There exists an entirely unique experience of dialectics. The compelling, drastic experience which refutes all 'gradualism' and shows all apparent 'development' as an eminently thoroughing dialectical transformation is the awakening from a dream...The new, dialectical method of historiography appears as the art of experiencing the present as a world of awakening in which that dream which we call the past is related

to truth. To experience the past in dream-remembrance !—Thus : Remembrance and awakening are intimately related Awakening is namely the dialectical, Copernican turn of remembrance." "The state of a consciousness that oscillates between sleep and awakening need only be transposed from the individual to the collective. Much that is merely extrinsic to the individual is intrinsic to the collective : architecture, fashion, even weather are internal to the collective in the same way that organ sensations, the feeling of sickness or health are internal to the individual. As long as they persist in an unconscious, unshaped dream form, they remain mere natural processes such as the digestive process, breathing; etc. They stand in the cycle of the eternaly same until the collective effects political mastery of them and sets them on the path of history."[39]

The foregoing observations indicate a seminal change in Benjamin's utilization of the sumealist—inspired notion of dream experience. Originally, like the surrealists, Benjamin valorized—indeed fetishized the *manifest contents* of dream experience by viewing them as autonomous sources of value and meaning. In the more mature version of the *Passagenwerk*, however the emphasis has switched from the manifest content of the dream-images to the moment of interpretation or *awakening*. And here, in opposition to surrealism and closer proximity to Freud, the category of awakening is emphatically associated with that of *remembrance*. The act of awakening is produced via a lobor of interpretive remembrance. The *Passagenwerk* may thus be understood as an elaborate effort *"die Vergangenheit aufzuarbeiten"*—to re-master the historical past—which otherwise threatens to fall victim to the somnabulance of the dream—state. It represents a quasi-Freudian attempt to make the unconscious consious—albeit, on the level of the *collective* rather than that of the *individual* past. It is Benjamin's own *Traumdeutung* in the service of human emancipation. i.e., in the raising of historical life fromthe level of an unconscious "natural process" to something consciously produced and lived.

The *Passagenwerk* then represents the consummation of Benjamin's initial flirtations with surrealism in the 1920s, an attempt as it were to transpose surrealist "powers of intoxication" from the cafes of the right bank to the panoramic domain of 19th century historiography.

That Benjamin never completed the project is a well known fact and usually attributed to circumstantial considerations : his precarious

situation as an impoverished German emigr'e in the 1930s, his untimely death on the Franco-Spanish border in September 1940. Gretel Adorno once suggested that Benjamin failed to consummate the work for deep-seated personal/psychological reasons. However plausible these explanations may be, I would like to suggest that the inconsummate nature of the ***Passagenwerk*** must be at least in part attributed to certain substantive difficulties inherent in the conceptual master-plan of the work itself. But for the time being I would like fo bracket this claim and take it up once more subsequent to the discussion of Adorno's critique of surrealism.[40]

When it comes to the question of Adorno's relationship to surrealism, the secondary literature displays a startling degree of unanimity. Indeed, the fine studies by Buck-Morss, Lunn, and Jay seemingly couldn't be in more agreement on this point.[41] All three commentators seize on what is assuredly the dominant thrust of Adorno's reservation toward the movement : the tendency of surrealism (at least in its ***visual*** manifestations) to succumb to a type of object - fetishism. Surrealism absorbs the fragments and detritus of everyday life in its disjointed construction. Adorno's question, however, is whether,the ***unmediated absorption*** of the fragments of immediacy in surrealist collages does not in the last analysis amount to a crass duplication of everyday life in its indigent given state. As Jay has Pointed out, Adorno's critique of surrealism results in strange bedfellows : it dovetails surprisingly with Lukas' rejection of modernism ***tout court*** for fetishizing the immediacy of bourgeois fragmentation, Needless to say, Adorno and Lukacs were, apart from their comparably damning judgments of surrealism, diametrical antipodes in aesthetic taste : Adorno was as a rule one of the staunchest defenders of aesthetic modernism, whereas Lukacs in contrast championed the "critical realism" of 19th century authors such as Stendahl, Balzac, Tolstoy (and in the twentieth century, Thomas Mann; another figure on whom. curiously, Adorno ana Lukacs find themselves in agreement).[42]

Both Jay and Lunn, while resting their cases primarily on Adorno's 1956 essay "Looking Back on Surrealism," cite a revealing footnote from ***philosophy of Modern Music*** to exemplify Adorno's reservations concerning surrealist art. In Adorno's view, "Surrealism is anti-organic and rooted in lifelessness. It destroys the boundary between the body and the world of objects, in order to convert society into a

hypostatization of the body. Its form is that of montage. This is totally alien to Schoenberg. In the case of surrealism, however, the more subjectivity renounces its rights over the world of objects, aggressively acknowledging the supremacy of that world, the more willing it is to accept at the same time the traditionally established form of the world of objects."[43]

To be sure, these remarks penetrate to the heart of Adorno's rejection of surrealist techniques. Here, the central thematic objection concerns the category of *montage*-precisely that aspect of surrealism that Benjamin found methodologically most serviceable. As a result of its renunciation of the category of mediation, surrealism accepts the material elements of bourgeois society as such and uncritically. For this reason it remains "inorganic and lifeless," since these elements remain untransformed in the surrealist contructions, i.e., they are not re-inserted in a new, conceptually integrated organic whole. Yet, "inorganicity" and "lifelessness" were the chief traits of high capitalism under conditions of total reification, which fostered *social* relations between things—commodities—and *objective* relations between persons. Hence, Adorno's conclusion that surrealism at its worst, celebrated a reified immediacy in its montages He illustrates this contention in a frequently cited passage form the 1956 essay. "Its montages are true still lifes, "remarks Adorno, "In as much as they rearrange the outmoded, they create *nature morte*." This is true insofar as surrealism represents the "capitulation of abstract freedom to the supremacy of things, hence to mere nature." He then goes on to make the following observations : "These [surrealist] pictures are not something that derive from within the subject, rather they are commodity-fetishes on which the subjective, the libido was once fixated, They bring back childhood by fetishism, not by self-immersion...Detached breasts, the legs of mannequins in silk stockings in collages—these are remembrance of those objects of partial instinctual gratification to which the libido once awoke. The forgotten reveals itself in them, thing-like, dead, as what love really desired and what it wants to make itself like —what we are like, Surrealism as a paralyzed awakening is akin to photography. to be sure, it utilizes imagos*, yet not the invariant, a-historical

* An unconscious, idealized image from childhood, usually representative of a parent.

ones of the unconcious subject...but historical ones in which the innermost being of the subject appears as something external to it; as the imitation of socio-historical being."[44]

In this characteristically terse, but essential passage Adorno identifies the manifest weakness of surrealism's assimilation of psychoanalytic concepts. Early in the essay, he had already taken issue with the surrealist appopriation of dream-life. The surrealists fetishize the manifest content of dreams, whereas in psychoanalysis of course it was always the latent dimension of ***dream-interpretation*** that received pride of place (yet, it must be pointed out that however much Breton et al, may have misunderstood the letter of freud's doctrines themselves, they of course had no pretension to becoming ***practicing analysts.*** Hence, as ***practicing artists,*** if their creative misinterpretation of pyschoanalytic principles yielded results that were aesthetically fruitful – so much the better !) Adorno also wished to point out that their claim to being in immediate contact with the unconscious or dreams, whose powers they claimed to be able to release at will for artistic purposes, was a sham. In the case of automatic writing, for example, such ***ecriture*** could hardly be an unadulterated product of the unconscious, since the very act of sitting down at a desk pen in hand —as well as the idea of a "program" of automatic writing itself – was the result of a prior conscious decision. He proceeded to cite the analytitic truism that veritable contact with unconscious components of the psyche can only be the product of a concerted and laborious therapeutic re-working of the past. It is not something that can be summoned up at a moment's notice for artistic purposes, however worthy these might be.

Similarly, his ctiticism in the preceding citation warns of the dangers of a precipitate appropriation of psychoanalytic concepts. Above all, if the fragmentary imagos of childhood are transposed ***tel quel*** into the surrealist collages without having first been (conceptually) deciphered, one runs the risk of promoting unilateral ***regression.*** This in Adorno's opinion is the upshot of surrealist "image fetishism." It recovers images of childhood libidinal attachment not as something first subjected to the healing powers of analytical self-insight ("self-immersion"), but rather in unmediated, inchoate form, i.e., qua "fixations". In focusing on the libidinally charged, dismembered torsos that figured so prominently in surrealism as a visual medium, Adorno seems to be operating with analytic

concepts borrowed from the "object-relations" school rather than orthodox Freudianism.

At the same time, it is important to register Adorno's insistence that the "imagos" of the surrealist collages are not reducible to the archaic, de-historicized images of a Jungian stamp (the Benjaminian conception of archaic wish-images would seem to fall victim to this characterization). Instead, their "truth-content" seems to lie in a measure of fidelity to the "socio-historical" present; albeit, a "reified" present, in which, as Adorno expresses it, the "innermost being of the subject appears as something external to it." A distinct sociohistorical component manifests itself in the surrealist montage, insofar as the latter is in a large measure comprised of veritable fragments of contemporary social life: familiar objects such as railway tickets, newspaper headlines, etc. It is precisely in their capacity to convey, however immediately, something of the historical present that surrealist collages avoid lapsing into ideology pure and simple (the case with Jung's archaic images) and establish a relation to truth.

To be sure, Adorno's hesitancies concerning surrealism and its favored technique of montage are already discernible in his criticism of certain of Benjamins's *Passagenwerk*-related studies from the 1930s. Two instances in particular are noteworthy. First, Adorno's epistolary response to Benjamin's 1935 Arcades Expose "Paris, Capital of the 19th Century". Among the numerous elements Adorno found objectionable in this crucial, initial formulation of the designs of the *Passagenwerk* was Benjamin's uncritical employment of the surrealist belief in the sacrosanct character of dream-experience As a motto for what is perhaps the most seminal passage of the Expose, Benjamin cites Michelet's saying "Chaque epoque reve la suivante." He goes on to propound an undeniably fanciful theory whereby the prehistoric past, which Benjamin lauds as a "classless society". has deposited utopian wish-images in the collective unconscious, which are reactivated as it were by the utopian potential of high capitalism As Benjamin observes : "In the dream in which every epoch sees in images the epoch that is to succeed it, the latter appears coupled with elements of prehistory—that is to say, of a classless society. The expriences of this society, which have their storeplace in the collective unconscious, interact with the new to give birth to the utopias which leave their configurations

in a thousand traces of life, from permanent buildings to ephemeral fashions,"[45] It is precisely these utopian potentials that Benjamin wished to release in the dialectical images of the *Passagenwerk*.

Adorno literally pounces upon the more tenuous aspects of Benjamin's construction. He objects stridently to the neo-romantic characterization of prehistory as a 'Golden Age'—a classless society; also to the uncritical reliance on the Jungian category of the "collective unconscious" which in Adorno's view is a mythological notion designed to mystify contemporary social antagonisms.

But his fundamental objection is to Benjamin's pseudo-surrealistic attempt to recast the dialectical image as a dream. As he remarks, "If you transpose the dialectical image into consciousness as a dream...you also deprive it of the objective liberating power which could legitimate it in materialistic terms. The fetish character of the commodity is not a fact of consciousness; rather, it is dialectical in the eminent sense that it produces consciousness."[46] In other words, by equating the problem of commodity fetishism with the world of dreams, Benjamin risks occluding its true origins in the sphere of production. Hence, he risked reducing problems of material life to "facts of consciousness"—dreams; consequently Adorno accuses him of an idealist deviation from the original materialist focus of the project. As a problem originating in the sphere of material life, commodity fetishism cannot be resolved—only mystified—by being transposed to the world of dreams; not to mention the specious role played by the Jungian "dreaming collective."

Three years later Adorno and Benjamin would disagree over the first draft of the latter's Baudelaire study. Again the central point of contention concerned Benjamin's uncritical use of surrealist techniques; in this case, the technique of montage. Since this debate has received its due in the existing secondary literature.[47] I will merely confine myself here to its essentials. At base, Adorno expressed his extreme reservations concerning the montage inspired methodological orientation of the study which resulted in an unmediated assemblage of data, wholly devoid of supporting commentary. Adorno could hardly disagree more with Benjamin's essay statement, "I have nothing to say. Only to show." What Benjamin's lacks, above all, according to Adorno is "mediation". As he observes, "motifs are assembled but not elaborated. Panorama and 'traces', flaneur

and arcades, modernism and the unchanging, without a theoretical interpre tation—is this a 'material' which can patently await interpretation without being consumed by its own aura ?"[48] In another passage from his detailed letter of criticism, he raises the following charges: "The theological motif of calling things by their names tends to turn into a wide-eyed presentation of mere facts. If one wished to put it very drastically, one could say that your study is located at the crossroads of magic and positivism. That spot is bewitched. Only theory could break the spell —your own resolute, salutarily speculative theory."[49]

The same principle is at isssue in both Adorno's criticism of Benjamin's 1938 Baudelaire essay ("The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire") as well as his 1956 discussion of surrealism: the unmediated absorption of material elements in montage-constructions relapses into a positivist affirmation of the given, unless these elements are arranged according to a preconceived, theoretically informed plan. However, behind this disagreement lay contrasting estimations about the value-signs proper to the so-called "material elements." Benjamin wanted to view these as "ambiguous": they contained utopian potentials pointing toward immanent prospects for the realization of the realm of freedom once they were reconstituted in the dialectical image. For Adorno, in contrast the moment of "negativity" was dominant: these elements were less the portents of an impending golden age than the signs of a Sisyphean, hellish, eternal recurrence : the presentation of the always-the-same as the eternally new that distinguished the logic of commodity fetishism.

In retrospect Adorno seems to have been right against Benjamin, Yet wrong concerning surrealism. He was right in the former case insofor as Benjamin over-estimated both the inherently redeeming powers of the dialectical image as well as the utopian aspects of a largely prosaic, disenchanted commodity producing society. Benjamin's primary sin was trying to apply methods of literary analysis to sociological material of a very different order, expectiog to produce "epiphanies" proper to the former realm of study in the case of the latter-which, it may be safely said in retrospect, has proven much more intractable than Benjamin imagined. His attempt to apply the aesthetic technique of the dialectical image to recalcitrant historical data thus invites the accusation of "misplaced concreteness": whereas Benjamin might have been able to effect the *aesthetic transfiguration* of social phenomena in the montage-sequences of the

Passagenwerk – following the artistic precedent established by Baudelaire and surrealism—the trajectory of socio-historical life itself follows an independent developmental logic. In this respect, as a viable piece of social analysis, the *Passagenwerk* would have to supply the dimension of theoretical mediation Adorno found lacking or else succumb to the status .of an aesthetically pleasing historical collage. Of course, it is impossible to say precisely what form the finished product might have taken. But on the basis of the evidence available, it seems doubtful that the *Passagenwerk* could have satisfactorily allayed Adorno's pertinent suspicions.

As far as his charge of "image-reification" against the surrealists is concerned—the aspect of his critique that has received the most publicity—a more skeptical verdict is in order, though one must cede a measure of cogency to his standpoint. The surrealists were certainly wont to fetishize certain privileged representations, and these at times were distinctly tainted by regressive traits, as Adorno suggests. If Baudelaire could claim that genius was childhood recaptured, then much of modern art attempted to follow his lead in retrieving the element of naivete that had been lost amid the refinements of civilization. Here, the paintings of Paul Klee, with their child-like insouciance, are models of success. Regression, however, is clearly the risk that any such attempt runs. Like any "ism", surrealism lays itself open to the dangers of formal codification and the attendant hazards of eternally repeating itself. Adorno identifies the historical etiology of this dilemma in his 1956 essay, when he observes that the "shocks" of surrealism lost their power following "the European catastrophe", which conferred an element of normalcy on shock by making it a caregory of everyday life.

Where Adorno errs, however, is in his attempt to measure surrealism qua artistic movement against standards appropriate to the theoretical sphere. The abdication of subjectivity, the refusal to mediate the component elements of the montage, results in the fetishization of a reified immediacy, argues Adorno. Yet, he makes this point after already having exploded the myth of surrealist anti-subjectivism: "The subject is at work much more openly and uninhibitedly in surrealism than in dreams," Adorno readily confesses. In essence, surrealist symbols "show themselves to be *far too rationalistic.*"[50] Contra Adorno, the lack of subjective input he

finds in surrealism is probably no greater than in its 19th century literary precursor symbolism. After all,it was Adorno himself who incisively warned againstthe dangers of taking the programmatic pronouncements of surrealism at face value (e. g., the one concerning the primacy of the unconscious for automatic writing). He himself was forced to admit that montage, if"correctly done", is "by definition also interpreting."[51] Rigorous standards of theoretical construction, though, certainly applicable to a project such as Benjamin's, are out of place, however, when brought to bear mechanically on the aesthetic sphere; a fact which Adorno readily admitted in other contexts. Fimally, it would be a grave error to attempt to extend the charge of "image-reification" from surrealism qua visual art form to the *poetic* and *literary* dimensions of the movement, aspects that are certainly less readily assimilable to Adorno's germane montage-critique.

In point of fact, Adorno's proximity to surrealism is much greater than it may at first appear, a fact that suggests that the inordinate attention conferred upon his critical remarks in the 1956 essay is misleading I would like to develop this point in some detail.

To begin with, one must take cognizance of what was perhaps the pet methodological category of negative dialectics, "constellation," a term whose Bejaminian origins are self-evident. In our discussion of the *Trauerspiel* book it was asserted that Benjamin's employment of the category reflected proto-surrealist stirrings, especially with reference to the category of montage. Does not Adorno's philosophical modus operandi bear the same affinities ? Given Adorno's critique of the montage -idea of the *Passagenwerk*, this is certainly an analogy one would not want to push too far. Nevertheless, there exist unmistakable parallels between the paratactic, non-discursive features of Adornian philosophical presentation—all of which hinge on the concept of constellation—and the surrealist technique of montage. This claim holds good as long as one recognizes the fact that in Adorno's case, these thought-monrages remain *conceptually mediated* to an extreme—unlike those of the surrealists and, on occasion, those of Benjamin.

The procedural centrality of constellation is expressed by Adorno in the following passage from *Negative Dialectics* : "The unifying

moment survives, without the negation of the negation, and without having to be responsible to abstraction as the highest principle, insofar as concepts do not progress step by step to the highest general concept, but instead enter in to a constellation...Constellations alone represent from without what the concept has excluded from within : the non-identical [*das Mehr*] that it wants to be so much but cannot."[52] In relying on constellations; Adorno incorporated an aesthetic dimension in to philosophy in order to save rhe latter from categorical hierarchies in which the sensuous nature of things themselves is continuously sacrificing on the altar of ascending conceptual abstraction. In this way he seeks to undo the metaphysical violence perpetrated by traditional techniques of philosophical conceptualization against things themselves, the non-identical. This design can be achieved only via montage-derived philosophical procedure, for only the latter avoids the traditional philosophical hierarchical ordering of conceptual elements in favor of an equilateral and non-discriminatory presentation of ideas.

The theroretical complement to Adorno's 1956 reflections on surrealism is provided by the related remarks in his posthumously published masterpiece, *Aesthetib Theory*, (1970). These observations represent an elaboration of the conclusion of the earlier surrealism essay, which Adorno ends on an appreciative note, comparing surrealism favorably to the *Neue Sachlichkeit*, its historical contemporary. Adorno thus relativizes emphatically the negative comments concerning surrealism made earlier in the essay. The movement is lauded for its frank portrayal of the consequences of a repressive and reified social totality, facts denied by *Neue Sachlichkeit's* sobriety. Surrealist imagery represents "the contents of that which *Sachlichkeit* taboos, because this content reminds it of its own thing-like nature, of the fact that its own rationality remains irrational. Surrealism gathers up what ' objectivity' refuses to men : the distorted images show what inhibition does to the object of desire. Through these distortions surrealism redeems the obsolete : an album of idio syncrasies in which the *promesse de bonheer*, denied to man in a technifiad world, goes up in smoke. If, however, surrealism itself appears obsolete today, this is only because men deny themselves the consciousness of renunciation that was captured in the surrealist negative."[53] Surrealist "irrationalism" thus gives the lie to the dominant reality principle by revealing the

bedrock of unreason on which it is based : the prohibition of desire, the perpetual postponement of the *promesse de bonheur*. Its alleged "distortions" are merely the hidden truth of the pretension to objectivity, to being-in-self, of the reigning social totality.

It is not as though in *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno's attitude toward surrealism has undergone a diametrical volte-face. Instead, his appraisal takes the form of a balanced constellation. The critique of surrealism for succumbing to an (Hegelian) dialectic of "absolute freedom,'—In which the impotence of the subject vis-a-vis the external, empirical is revealed—is retained. As Adorno remarks, "Surrealism...was done in by its illusory belief in an absolutely subjective being-for-itself, which is objectively mediated and cannot go beyond being-for-itself in the domain of art."[54]

Yet, surrealism is also praised on many counts. It is for example lauded, along with impressionism, for having "put sponteneity on the agenda" of aesthetic modernism (36). In a discussion that amplified the conclusion of the 1956 essay, Adorno argues that :"Currents like expressionism and surrealism, the irrationality of which was highly disturbing to some, acted up against repression, authority and obscurantism" (82). Rather than serving as a confirmation of a reified social order, as some would claim, irrationalism and the "chaotic features of authentic modern art...are the ciphers of a critique of a spurious second nature; they seem to be saying : 'This is how chaotic your order actually is" (138). For Adorno, the use of irrational elements, e.g., the "fantastic" dimension of surrealist painting, performs a crucial de-fetishizing function over against the dominant reality principle, whose rigidity and inflexibleness are thereby unmasked : the latter is indicted by what it refuses to tolerate. The social super ego and its accompanying array of taboos and prohibitions is thus confronted with the absurdity of its own restrictions : "Look how easily things could be otherwise, "might be taken as the secret motto of much surrealist art. For analogous reasons, Adorno endorses the "shock-effects" of surrealist montage, In montage, "the paradox that the operation of a rationalized world is a result of historical becoming is perceived as shock : ...the sensory apparatus of the individual is traumatized by the discovery that the rational is actually irrational" (440). The shock effect de-fetishizes

by exploding the pretense of a rationalized capitalist life-world to being natural and eternal. This realization is produced via the deconstruction and remounting of the everyday imagery of the life-world itself whose transient, historical character thus stands exposed.

Perhaps the most startling turn-about in *Aesthetic Theory* relating to surrealism is Adorno's concerted attempt to legitimate the category of montage, Certain dangers still inhere in montage as an artistic technique : "What makes montage feeble," Adorno observes, "is its inability to expose individual elements," its "adapting the ready-made material supplied from outside" (83). Yet, there are no artistic procedures immune from abuse—not even Schoenperg's employment of the twelve—tone system.

Aside from the above, by now familiar criticism, Adorno goes out of his way to indicate the many positive contributions of montage. For one, montage effectuates a praiseworthy change in conventional habits of perception : as a technique that "reached its zenith with surrealism .. montage shuffles and reshuffles elements of reality as seen by healthy common sense so as to wrest from them a change in direction" (83). "Montage, "Adorno observes, "arose in opposition to mood-laden art" (i, e., impressionism), which sought "to redeem aesthetically what was alienated and heterogeneous." For Adorno, this was a "flimsy conception, all the more so since the supremacy of prosaic thing-likeness over the living stbject just kept increasing." Montage appeared on the scene in salutory contrast to all romanticizing, aesthetic tendencies, in order thereby to give the lie to premature ideological claims to universal harmony and well-being, Montage, which may be defined as the independence of individual elements vis-a-vis the whole, proves fatal to traditional conceptions of organic totality, and thereby testifies to a permanent condition of non-identity. As Adorno comments : "It is against this romantic turn that montage reacted negatively. Montage goes back to the cubist practice of pasting newspaper clippings onto paintings, and so on. The illuslon that art had of becoming reconciled with external reality through figuration was to be destroyed; the nonillusory debris of real life was to be let into the work; no bones were to be made about the break between the two; indeed this break was to be used to be used to good aesthetic effect .. works of art that negate meaning must be able to articulate discontinuity

this is the role played by montage. Montage disavows unity by stressing the disparity of the parts while at the same time affirming unity as a principle of form" (222).Yet montage never remains wholly free of the danger of the "capitulation by art before what is different from it."

There are other features of surrealism that come in for special pr-aise by Adorno as well. Surrealism represents the death-blow to the staiq academicism of all neo-classical academism of all neo-classical art. In it, the images of antiquity are toppled from their Platonic heaven: "In Max Ernst's work they roam about like phantoms among the late nineteenth -century middle class, for which art, neutralized to the form of a cultural heritage, had in fact become a ghost. Wherever those movements which temporarily touched base with Picasso and others focused on antiquity, it was in order to depict it as hell" (415).

Adorno also acknowledges the surrealist dialectic of "art and anti art," a tension that would define so much of artistic modernism. "The surrealist successors of Dadaism rejected art without being able to shake it off completely," (44) Adorno observes. "Surrealism once undertook to rebel against the fetishistic segregation of art in a sphere unto itself. But surrealism moved beyond pure protest and become art" (325). Yet, this ultimate rapprochement with what surrealism once scorned was in no way a compromise with its original intentions (with the notable exception of someone such as Dali, whom Adorno describes as a "jet-set painter"). Instead, this development signaled a process of maturation for surrealism, once it was recognized that the dadaist procedures of bluff and provocation had themselves been recuperated by the insatiable bourgeois appetite for culture and elevated into a new aesthetic norm. Instead, surrealism now sought, unlike dada, to undo bourgeois aestheticism from within, producing a new, de-aestheticized version . As Adorno notes, "eminent surrealists like Max Ernst and Andre Masson who refused any collusion with commercial interests moved towards accepting formal principles...as the idea of shocking people wore off and needed to be replaced by a mode of painting. The step to non-representationality was taken at the moment when surrealists decided to expose the accustomed reality as illusion by illuminating it with the aid of a photgraphic flash, as it were" (363).

In light of such remarks the widespread belief that Adorno simple rejected surrealism in favour of a quasi-mandarin attachment to the music of the vienna school or the "high" modernism in general would seem in need of substantial revision. Certainly, his critique of surrealism (both the 1956 and 1970 verision) was an indirect response to the methodological failings of Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*, that is, Benjamin's materialist conception of the dialectical image as an unmediated montage of *faits sociaux*. This concern accounts for the often ascerbic character of his surrealism critique. As we have tried to show, his fundamental charge of "image - reification" is certainly not without foundation. At the same time, his positive valuation of the movement's worth must also be recognized. It is a valuation that hinges upon the surrealist dialectic of "art and anti-art" : surrealism continues the dadaist assault on bourgeois aestheticism -- i. e., on the bourgeois conception of art as high-brow *divertissement*, yet it astutely perceives that this assult "terminated in something trivial" (44) : infinite repetition or self-caricature. The question surrealism faces then is : how dose one continue to create art after the dadaist unmasking of the extreme complacency of bourgeois aestheticism. The answer given by surrealism -- and that aspect which Adorno singles out ror praise -- is that one incorporates the dadaist anti-aestheticist critique into the very heart of the work of art. In contrast to dadaism, this means one still has "works of art". Yet, these represent works of an entirely different nature from the *affirmative* works of the bourgeois tradition. Instead, one is left with *de-aestheticized works of art* : works of art whish divest themselves voluntarily of the aure of affirmation, in which the moment of refusal or negativity is embodied in the work a priori. For Adorno, this trait represents the hallmark of all authentic mocern art.

In conclusion I would like to return to Benjamin's *Passagenwerk*, specifically to its systematic intentions, which Adorno on occasion found so probiematical.

It is clear that Benjamin himself oscillated in his conception of the *Passagenwork*. From Adorno's 1935 critiqe of the Arcades Expose. it seems it was Benjamin's original intention to portary the phantasmagorical world of nineteenth century commodity production as a kind of mythological hell of eternal repetition (the main motif of Benjamin's discussion of "The Gambler").

This was apparently the fundamental theme of early drafts of the study (circa 1929) which Benjamin had read to Adorno during their "historic" conversations in Koingstein. [56] The problem was that Benjamin differed with Adorno on two of the most fundamental aspects of "negative dialectics" : ideology critique and the ***Bilderverbot***. Benjamin's rejection of both components was inter-related. As Jurgen Habermas has demonstrated, Benjamin, in opposition to the Frankfurt School theorists, related ***conservatively*** rather than ***critically*** to hisobjects of study. [57] He was less concerned with the unmasking of ideological illusion than he was with preserving endangered semantic potentials, a method Habermas has described felicitously as "redemptive criticism". Indeed it may be said that for Benjamin all knowledge that fails to concern itself with the question of redemption remains partial and inferior. This was an attitude, to be sure, he carried over to the Arcades Project. It too would be an exercise in redemptive criticism-- an attempt to redeem forgotten semantic potentials and traces of meaning; yet, one that would surmount the "negativism" of the earlier ***Trauerspiel*** book, where the 17th century was viewed as an age of decline. Indeed, Benjamin felt compelled to remind himself of this attitudinal change on occasion in his notes : "The pathos of this work : no eras of decline (***verfallszeiten***)."[58]

I have already indicated what it was Benjamin hoped to "redeem" from the phenomenal manifestations of the 19th century social life : images of utopia ("wish" or "dream-images") produced by a fruitful intermingling ("correspondences") of past and contemporary historical life. Humanity's dream, dating from the immemorial, for a utopian social order -- a "classless society" -- was sedimented in the phenomenal forms of bourgeois existence; yet here they remained inprisoned in the perverse, distorted framework of a commodity producing society. Only once the iniquitous relations of production were transformed in keeping with the utopian potentiality of the mode of production itself -- which was capable for the first time in history of delivering a society of plenty and abundance -- would this historical situation be rectified. Indeed, the "ambivalence" in capitalism as a social formation lay precisely in the fact that this capacity for a society of utopian abundance remained distorted by the fetishistic traits of a commodity producing society.

Benjamin's intention in the *Passagenwerk* was thus to blast the new times, or moments of utopian potential out of their phantasmogorical imprisonment in 19th century social life. In Benjamin's time, the inter-war years, these potentials lived on as faint memory traces that were growing fainter by the day. Essetially, they took on the form of *ruins*: the 19th century phantasmagoia was not handed down "intact", but in a state of advanced decay. It is not difficult to see that the phenomenal elements he took as privileged objects of investigation in the *Passagenwerk*--arcades, world exhibitions, iron constructions, gas lighting, barricades, etc. --possessed a tenuous if not negligible value while Benjamin was setting his notes for the project to paper in the 1930s. The arcade in which the first half of Benjamin never tried to conceal the fact that his Baudelaire studies embodies a type of *Passagenwerk in nuce*. The essential statement of his positive revaluation of the concept is to be found in the following passage : "Experiences of the aura thus rest on the transposition of a response common to human relationships to the relationships between the inanimate or natural object and man. The person we look at, or who feels he is being looked at, looks at us in return. ***To perceive the aura of an object means to invest it with the ability to look at us in return.***"[60] To perceive the aura of an object means to endow it with humanized, animate traits usually reserved for relations between persons. It means to conceive of inanimate objects *fraternally* rather than manipulatively, to grant them the capacity to project attributes which transcend their simple *Zuhandensein*. It bespeaks an earlier *ensouled* relationship of nature to humanity, one that the modern age has all but repressed. To be sure, there is something of this attribution of supranatural, spiritual characteristics to objects (or nature) in Kant's discussion of the sublime.

Benjamin offers a number of suggestive illustrations from the cultural sphere where the aura is displayed in exemplary fashion. Among these, three stand out. The poetry of Baudelaire is a *locus classicus* of auraticism. The *correspondances* establish a collective relationship to past historical life where nature is viewed fraternally. And as Benjamin observes, "where there is experience in the strictest sense, contents of the individual past combine with materials of the collective past."[61]

Secondly, Benjamin takes up the *memoire involuntaire* of Proust. This faculity produces that wealth of spontaneous, inexhaustible, and elusive associations that crystallize in the stream of *madeleine* - triggered reminiscences. The *memoire involuntaire* is the repository par excellence of non-mechanical, unreifiable experience. As Benjamin states : "If the distinctive feature of the images that rise from the *memoire involuntaire* is seen in their aura, then photography is decisively implicated in the phenomenon of the 'decline of the aura'. "[62]

Yet, it is perhaps in our third example. that of painting versus photography, that Benjamin's *volte-face* in comparison the "Work of Art" essay is most transparent. Whereas photography is eminently non-auratic--it lacks fhe all important capacity to return the gaze--precisely the opposite is true of painting : "the painting we look at reflects back at us that of which our eyes will never have their fill ... [To] the eyes that will never have their fill of a painting, photography is like food for the hungry or drink for the thirsty. "[63] That is, photography is deprived of experience jn the meaningfull sense; its satisfactions are much more mundane (like eating and drinking) ; it is fully implicated in the atrophy of experience characteristic of a reified life-world; unlike auratic poetry, literature, or painting, it provides no effective bulwark against the process of *Sinnverlust* (decay of meaning) that characterizes an increasingly rationalized bourgeois world.

I would like to suggest that what Benjamin was seeking to redeem so fervently in the *Passagenwerk* was precisely the type of "experience in a crisis-proof form" suggested by the foregoing definitions of the aura. It was precisely such experiential traces that he detected in the "wish-images of utopia" that distinguished 19th century life and whose preservation he deemed so essential. Therein lay motivation for the "labor of recollection" that defined his efforts.

In many respects, however, this was a project that was fore-doomed from the outset, not merely because of Benjamin's uneviable material circumstances, but for compelling conceptual reasons. Fredric Jameson has made much of the "nostalgic" dimension of Benja nin's work. [64] Whether or not this category could be said to represent the

dominant aspect of his thought, Benjamin certainly lamented the passing of previous historical eras in which *use - value* had as yet not been fully sacrificed to *exchange - value*. One need only consult the opening pages of "The Storyteller" for irrefutable proof to this effect.

The *Passagenwerk* was uncompletable because the world - historical march of disenchantment outstripped the powers of Benjamin's retrospective gaze. That is, it became increasingly evident that there was nothing left that could return the gaze of the dialectical theorist in his search for auratic traces and *correspondances*. For in order to return the gaze, an object must bear certain vestiges of ensoulment. Such was the nature of the innumerable dream configurations of 19th century life. Yet, this remained true only insofar as in this era alone *artisanal and mechanized production techiques overlapped*. It was this historically unique conjuncture - - a period of transition between precapitalist and capitalist epochs--which alone provided fertile soil for that commingling of old and new elements on which the utopian hopes of Benjamin's project were based. In this sense the 19th century represented the privileged, inimitable locus for Benjamin's study. Yet, if the Weberian *Entzauberungsprozess* has progressed with such implacable sway that the last vestiges of pre-capitalist existence - - i. e., an existence in which objects still bore the distinctive feautures of direct human fashioning, where production was not determined solely by the demands of "abstract labor" - - had been irredeembly extirpated, would the correspondegces Benjamin sought after still be forthcoming ? In this respect, as we have already indicated, the intentions of Benjamin's project paralleled the surrealist interest in infusing everyday objects with the traces of desire and mystery which they were deprived of qua commodities.

If the transitional era described above was the *sine qua non* of Benjemin's *Passagenwerk*, in our epoch his project cannot help but have an anachronistic - - even nostalgic - - ring to it. Expressed indelicately, this means that "his objects are not our objects." We can conceive of such correspondences only as effects proper to an historical past our links with which grow more tenuous by the day. For ours is a world of pre-fabricated images, built-in obsolescence, urban sprawl (and blight), computer languages, a "society of information," in which even nostalgia must be artificially induced by periodic media blitzes. In such a world, not only objects but also other persons have lost the capacity to "return the gaze".

Notes and References

1. Adorno's phrase in *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1973), p.
2. An all too neglected step in this direction has been taken by Heinz Paetzold in *Neo-Marxistische Asthetik* (Dusseldorf, 1974), 2 volx.
3. Benjamin, *Passagenwerk* I (Frankfurt, 1983, p. 588.
4. Benjamin, *Briefe* I, G. Scholem and T. W. Adorno, eds. (Frankfurt, 1966) p. 390.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 663.
6. Benjamin, "Das Proframm der kommenden Philosophie," *Gesammelte Schriften* II (1) (Frankfurt, 1974), p. 158.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*, p. 160.
10. *Ibid.* p. 159; emphasis added.
11. Jameson, *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, 1971), p. 96.
12. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (A an Arbor, 1974), p. 14.
13. Richard Wolin, *Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption* (New York, 1982); see especially chapter 3, "Ideas and Theory of Knowledge," pp. 79-106. See also Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin* of *Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1977),
14. Of. *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis, 1984), p. 72. For Burger, surrealism becoms the paradigm of the "historical avant-garde". I have criticized Burger' As interpretation of surrealism in my eassy "Communism and the Avant-Garde," *Thesis* 11 (Summer, 1985).
15. Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama* (London, 1977), p. 33.
16. Benjamin, *Passagenwerk* I, pp. 591-492.
17. F. Rosenzwelg, *Der Stern der Erlosung* (1976), p. 323.
    For a conceptual history of nunc stans, see *Historisches worterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 6 (Darmstadt. 1986,)pp. 990-991.
18. Benjamin, *Origin of German Tragic Drama*, p. 34.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Bloch, "Revueform in der Philosophie," *Eroschaft dieser Zeit* (Frankfurt, 1962). pp. 367-371.
21. Bloch, "Erinnerungen," in Adorno et al., *Uber Walter Benjamin* (Frankturt, 1968), pp. 22-23.
22. Bloch, *Erbscnaft dieser zeit*, p. 371.
23. Benjamin, *Passagenwerk* 1 p. 574.
24. It should be pointed out that Rolf liedemann, editor of the magisterial 6-volume edition of Benjamin s work. has recently challenged Adorno's idea that the *Passegenwerk* was to consist of a "montage of citations." Cf. "Einleltung des Herausgebers", *Passagenwerk* I, p. 13.
25. Bloch. "Erinnerungen," *op cit.*, p. 22.

26. Benjamin, *Passagenwerk* I, p. 574.
27. For Adorno's systematic epistemological reflections on the problem, see the section of *Negative Dialectics* entitled " Vorrang des Objekts", mistranslated in English as "Preponderance of the Object "
28. Benjamin, *Briefe* II, pp1 489, 496.
29. *Ibid* , p. 491.
30. Benjamin, "Surrealism," *Reflections* (New York, 1978), p. 179.
31. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, p. 241.
32. Benjamin, *Reflections*, p. 182.
33. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, pp. 10-11.
34. Adorno, *Uber Walter Benjamin* (Frankfurt, 1970), pp. 53-54.
35. The Marx citation can be found in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, R.Tucker ed. (New York, 1978), p. 15. It is cited by Benjamin on p 583 of the *Passagenwerk*.
36. The first two quotations are from pp. 1002 and 580 of the *Passagenwerk*. The ensuing citations are culled from the section entitled "City of Dreams, Future-Dreams, Anthropological Nihilism," pp. 493-496.
37. Benjamin, "Paris. die Haupstadt des XIX. Jahrhunderts," *Passagenwerk* p. 55.
38. Benjamin' *Passagenwerk*, p. 499.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 491-492.
40. In terms of the general aesthetics of Critical Theory, it would be extremely germane to examine Herbert Marcuse's attempt to integrate surrealist principles. His major discussion of surrealism can be found in *An Eassy on Liberation* (Boston, 1969).
41. Cf. Buck-Morss *The Origin af Negative Dialectics* (New York, 1977), E. Lunn, Marxism and Modernism (Berkeley, 1982), and Jay, *Marxism and Totality* (Berkeley, 1984) and *Adorno* (Cambridge Mass., 1984), p. 129.
42. For a representative sampling of Lukacs' aesthetic judgments, one might consult the following works : *Realism in Our Time* (New York, 1971), *Studies in Europeen Realism* (New York, 1964), and *Essays on Thomas Mann* (Cambridge, Mass, 1965. See also the discussion by Lunn *Marxism and Modernism*, pp. 75-145, *passim*.
43. Adorno, *Philosophy of Modern Music* (New York, 1973), p. 51.
44. Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism," in *Litcrary Modernism* Irving Howe, ed. (New York, 1967) p. 223. Any effort to translate Adorno isheroic. It must be said, however, that this translation is lacking in a number of absolutely essential respects. Hence, I have altered it freely in keeping with the German original, which can be found in *Noten zur Literatur* I (Frankfurt, 1958) pp. 155-162,
45. Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire : A Lyric Poet in the Era of High*

Capitalism (London, 1973), p. 150.

46. Adrono, *Aesthetics and Politics* (London, 1977), p. 111.
47. Cf. Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, pp. Lunn, *Marxism and Modernism*, pp. 162-172; Wolin, *Walter Benjamin : An Aesthetic of Redemption*, pp. 198-207.
48. Adorno, *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 167.
49. *Ibid.*, p. 129-130.
50. Adorno, "Looking Back on surrealism," *op cit.*, p. 22.
51. Cited in Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics*, p. 269n.
52. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt, 1966), p. 162.
53. Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism", p. 224.
54. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, C. Lenhardt, trans. (London, 1984), p. 44. All subsequent references will appear in parenthesis.
55. Cf. R. Wolin, "The De-aestheticization of Art : on Adorno's *Aesthetische Theorie*, *Telos* 41 (Fall, 1979).
56. Cf. Adorno's letter in *Aesthetics and Politics*, p. 112, in which he specifically reproaches Benjamin for having gone back on the earlier version in favour of the 19th century as a "Golden Age."
57. Habermas, "Consciousness Raising or Redemptive Criticism," *New German Critique* 17 (Spring, 1979).
58. Benjamin, *Passagenwerk*, p. 1-23.
59. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York, 1969), pp. 222 223.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
61. *Ibid.*, 190.
62. *Ibid.*, 189.
63. *Ibid.*
64. The chapter on Benjamin in *Marxism and Form* is entitled "Walter Benjamin or Nostalgia".

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Narcissism and Political Psychology: from the Frankfurt School to Christopher Lasch

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This essay is about the career of the concept of narcissism, from radical critical tool in the writings of the Frankfurt school and Erich Fromm to politically ambiguous lament in the work of Christopher Lasch.

The fullest expression of Frankfurt school ideas about narcissism is Theodore W. Adorno's "Freudian Theory and the pattern of Fascist propaganda," which is in turn based quite closely on Freud's excursus into political psychology, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.* (Adorno 1951; Freud 1960) While Freud's book was certainly the first to give a social psychological analysis of narcissism, Adorno's attempt to analyze fascism in terms of narcissism obviously went beyond Freud's account in the scope of its emphasis on concrete history and its critique of authoritarianism.

In his 1914 essay "On Narcissism," Freud had argued that the narcissist directed libidinal energy toward himself or herself. In 1921, in *Group psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* he went on to argue that the concentration on self characteristic of the narcissist could easily be turned into identification with a crowd or leader. Adorno built on this theory and emphasized that such identification was most easily accomplished by weak egos of the sort that he thought were manipulated by fascist leaders or speechmakers. (Freud 1914: 139-147 ; Freud 1960: 52 ; Adorno 1951: 418-419) Adorno's essay reflected both his experience of German fascism and the empirical analysis of American society done by him and other members of the Frankfurt school after they left Germany in the nineteen-thirties and came to the United States.

The subsequent career of the concept of narcissism in Adorno and other members of the Frankfurt school such as Herbert Marcuse

and Max Horkheimer, as well as Erich Fromm, who published his early German essays in the Frankfurt school journal but later went his own way, is a complicated one. 2 Nevertheless, two points stand out. First, narcissism was always a theory of both individual neurosis and of the society in which it occurs. Second, the theory of narcissism was always colored by the general goal of finding a psychological basis for why people accept unjustified authority. It must be seen as one expression of the search for understanding authoritarian behaviour, a search which runs through the philosophical psychology of Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer, and Fromm and is expressed in such diverse Frankfurt school works as the political philosophy of Franz Neumann and the literary criticism of Walter Benjamin. (Adorno 1974 : 16-18: Marcuse 1963 : 58; Horkheimer 1949 : 369; Fromm 1965 : 17-33; Neumann 1957 : 12-67; Benjamin 1973)

These two points must be kept in mind when looking at the way the concept of narcissism has surfaced again in the United States with the recent work of Christopher Lasch. For, first, methodological difficulties which plagued Frankfurt school attempts to create an individual and social theory of narcissism are exacerbated in Lasch's account. Second, with Lasch the concept of narcissism has ceased to play the anti-authoritarian role that it played for the Frankfurt school and Fromm as they analyzed the psychological basis of fascism.

The methodological difficulties arose as the theorists of the Frankfurt school grappled with the duality of narcissism as a theory of both society and the individual. The narcissistic character was held to be different from the neurotic usually studied by Freud. Whereas the latter lived in a society in which the most fundamental etiology of neurosis or at least the most direct one, was found in the family, the former lived in a society in which the most direct etiology of neurosis was found not in the family but in public society. Because of this the relation between one, the study of individual neurosis and two, the social conditions for it, was said to have changed. The first became less important and the second more important. (Marcuse 1963 : 47-50; Adorno 1951 : 431-432) Hence the theory of narcissism required, but never really received, at least from Adorno, Marcuse or Horkheimer, a new methodology for studying the modern relation between the individual and society. Furthermore, the various attempts to find such a methodology led to an inconsistency with another major contribution of Frankfurt

school philosophy of psychology : Adorno's and Marcuse's methodological defense of classical Freudian analysis against the notion that it must be revised from a sociological perspective.

This defence, however, was so one-sided that it did not even adequately account for Freud's own use of sociology in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* much less for Adorno's and Marcuse's more extensive use of Marxist and other sociological concepts in their own writings on narcissism. Against such neo-Freudians as Fromm and Karen Horney, Marcuse and Adorno argued that Freud's categories aimed at studying the social element that was already in the individual before entering adult society and hence did not need to be revised as much as the neo-Freudians thought by adding to them elements garnered from the study of interaction between adult egos and society. (Adorno 1952 : 27; Marcuse 1955 : 254) I am not interested at the moment in the merits of this dispute, but in the fact that the Frankfurt school thinkers' arguments against the revisionists are inconsistent with their own theory of narcissism. There are extreme problems with combining the anti-neo-Freudian claim that Freud's categories already contain enough social elements in them, with an account of narcissism which essentially demands the introduction of sociological concepts that increasingly and of necessity become more complex even than the ones that Freud added in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.*

In elaborating the principle that Freudian categories are already adequately social the Frankfurt school emphasized that the family, i e , a social unit, helped create the psychological individual, They were concerned that the neo-Freudians wanted to concentrate too much on adult public society and not enough on the original family situation. (Adorno 1952: 26-28; marcuse 1955: 248-249) From a methodological standpoint the Frankfurt school analysis was only individualistic in that it emphasised how concentration on the early social struggle of the individual in the family gave a deeper analysis than concentration on an individual abstracted from those early formative relations and then analyzed in his or her present relation to society. Since their aim was studying the social in the individual, the Frankfurt school theory was not individualistic in its aim. However, since emphasis was put on studying the i dividual in order to see the social better, their analysis was individualistic in in its means.

How is the anti-revisionist principle of studying the social in the individual undermined by the theory of narcissism? In his first fully formulated critique of the neo-Freudians "Die Revidierte Psychoanalyse," Adorno had criticised both what he saw as their overemphasis on the ego as opposed to the id, and their exaggeration of the importance of adult social interaction in understanding neurosis. (Adorno 1952: 26) The argument of this 1946 essay, however, is in striking contrast to the one found in Adorno's 1951 "Freudian Theory and the pattern of Fascist propaganda." 3 This latter work, in developing a new theory of narcissism, first, accepted Freud's 1914 definition of narcissism as a state involving the direction of libidinal energy to one's own ego. Second, it accepted Freud's own modification of that theory in his attempt to analyze crowds. For both Freud and Adorno the narcissistic character may redirect the libidinal energy originally directed to self back again to crowds or leaders, but is still narcissistic because those others are only seen as extensions of self. (Freud 1960: 56; Adorno 1951: 418-419)

One might ask why narcissists should identify with others. This question leads to the third component of Adorno's theory of narcissism, and his clearest advance over Freud: the followers of fascist leaders have weak egos which necessitates their identification with others because of their own powerlessness. Fascist authoritarians then manipulate those weak egos. (Adorno 1951: 418-419) I would put it in the following way: narcissists who follow authoritarian leaders have large but weak egos. The largeness of their egos causes them to direct libidinal energy to themselves, but the weakness of their egos causes them to identify with others in a submissive way.

Now it should be obvious that Adorno's theory of narcissistic fascism is inconsistent with his strong methodological attack on the neo-Freudians made five years earlier. Far from simply studying the social in the individual his theory of narcissism looks precisely at and emphasizes the role of actual public society in crea ing the narcissistic character. Thus, there is considerable development between Adorno's original negative critique of revisionism in 1946 and his own positive theory of narcissism in 1951. However, it was only in his 1955 essay, "Sociology and Psychology," written nine years after "Die Revidierte Psychoanalyse.' and four years after "Freudian Theory and the Pattern of Fascist Propaganda." that Adorno really began to take note of how he must change his own critique of the neo-Freudians in order to account for his own theory

of narcissism. (Adorno 1955, 1967, 1968). In that essay Adorno made the important concession to the neo-Freudians that Freud did misunderstand the extent to which the feeling of helptessness, for example, comes not cnly from early childhood but also from adult social interaction. (Adorno 1963 : 83-89).

Indeed, nine years after his original blast against the neo-Freudians in 1946, Adorno's principle disagreement with them became not so much their emphasis on social factors in adult life as what he still regarded as their excessive emphasis on ego factors. Adorno thought that the manipulation of narcissists in mass society was more often done through the unconscious and the id than he claimed the neo-Freudians realized. (Adorno 1968 : 89)

Unfortunately Adorno never admitted that he had changed his ideas, nor did he extend what amounted to a more positve reevaluation of neo-Freudian stress on social factors to a revaluation of any specitic neo-Freudian theory of narcissism. If only Adorno had extended his brief comments in 1955 to a comparison of his own theory of narcissism with a full scale rival theory such as the one later offered by Erich Fromm, the arguments between Frankfurt school stress on instinct and Frommian stress on society could perhaps have been at least stated more clearly. However in his early accounts of social psychology, *Escape from Freedom, Man for Himself*, and *The Forgotten Language*, Fromm did not make the concept of narcissism central. By the time he did, in books like *The Heart of Man* and *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*, Adorno was losing interest in the topic. (Fromm 1965, 1947, 1951 1971 : 71-17. 19 3 : 200-205)

One may ask of course, how significant is Adorno's admission that the theory of narcissism must accomodate the revisionist stress on adult society. Answering this question would involve an inquiry into the possible reach of a social psychology. To what extent can a social psychology illuminate both psyche and society ? This in turn involves asking how far a repressive society can reach into the individual psyche. It also involves asking to what extent a unified view about the social ethics and liberation of human beings depends on integrating sociology and psychology How much are the individual and society integrated and how much should they be integrated ? Adorno's utilization of adult social interaction in his own theory of narcissism does not resolve the former issue, in that it does not resolve the debate over the extent that an instinctual psychoplogy can be used as a barometer of what is happening in society. To what

extent does society follow its own logic and to what extent does it follow the logic of the instincts ? Adorno gave more of a sketch of a resolution than an actual resolution of the issue. Clearly Adorno thought that the reach of society into the individual was very strong, at the same time holding that instinctual psychology can reveal much about adult society. If Fromm was willing to give up some reliance on the study of instinctual drives such as the libido, in order to concentrate more on society's reach into the individual, Adorno seemed to want to maintain both equally. (Fromm 1980 ; 1-33; Adorno 1966 : 88-89) But this desire remained only a program and was not thoroughly worked out.

Given our newly gained perspective that the theory of narcissism developed by the central figures of the Frankfurt school, Adorno, Horkheimer and Narcuse, included a strong sociological element even as they railed against Fromm and Horney for including such an element, our attention naturally turns to the content of their sociological analysis of narcissism. Primarily they concerned themselves with (1) the weakening of the family, (2) the development of fascism and (3) the growth of a society dominated by consumerism. (Adorno 1951; Marcuse 1963; Horkheimer 1949) Jessica Benjamin, however, in her searching analyses of Frankfurt school psychology, criticizes these alleged nodal points in the historical and social application of the theory of narcissism. She notes that such criteria for the thesis of the weakening and decline of the family as less internalization by young people of family values is rendered problematic by the gathering of cross class data. (Benjamin 1978: 52) In addition, as Benjamin also notes, it is unclear sometimes how Marcuse and Adorno conceive of the relation between fascism & consumer society. In some ways they seem to be conflated. (Benjamin 1977: 54: Marcuse 1963 : 52 ; Adorno 1951 : 432)

These difficulties make the sociological grounding of narcissism problematic. Even more problematic, however, is the relationship between the claims about the decline of the family, and the growth of fascist and consumer society on the one hand and the alleged general decline of the Individual on the other. Of course the theory of the decline of the individual is in part simply the theory of narcissism itself, but only in part. In general the Frankfurt school mean by the decline of the individual that people have lost so much autonomy and uniqueness that privacy itself has become problematic. (Horkheimer 1974 : 128-161) Now one but only one, reason why one can say that the individual declines is because of the growth of large weak egos characteristic of the narcissist. Although such

individuals often claim to be doing their"own thing" their own thing is usually socially controlled. There are, however, also a number of other causes offered for individuality's decline. Frankfurt school economic theory, for example, distinguished between competitive capitalism, in which the individual still had claims to some autonomy and privacy, and monopoly capitalism, of which fascism was supposed to be most conspicuous example, and in which the individual'ss decline was rather precipitious, (Neumann 1957 : 41-42 ; Horkheimer 1974 : 333 ; Adorno 1974 : 135)

Of course different members of the Frankfurt school emphasized different causes of the decline of the individual in the broad as opposed to just the psychoanalytic sense. Horkheimer, for example, was particularly fond of pinpointing the weakening of the family as a major cause. (Horkheimer 1949 : 333) Yet he did not develop as comprehensive a Freudian theory of the decline of the individual as did Marcuse and Adorno. In contrast, Adorno's "Freudian Theory and the pattern of Fascist Propaganda," dose not emphasize the weakening of the family at all. What is interesting is that it is usually when the decline of the individual is seen in its largest social context that the inability of Freudian theory to explain it is most apparent, either to the reader or the Frankfurt school writings or to the writers themselves.

In this context both Adorno and marcuse left records of their own doubts concerning the perfect or even imperfect coexistence of (1) the theory of the decline of the individual and its psychological derivation, the "obsolescence of the Freudian concept of man," with (2) the critique of neo-Freudianism and the assumption that the individual has not declined and that the Freudian concept of the human being retains full applicability and dose not have to be supplemented with sociological investigation. We have already seen some of these doubts in "Sociology and Psychology," but the following passage from "Freudian Theory and the pattern of Fascist Propaganda," already expresses doubts about the theory of narcissism even in the midst of a defense of it:

"It is not accidental that the nineteenth century is the great era of psychological thought. In a thoroughly reified society, in which there are no direct relationships between men, and in which each person has been reduced to a social atom, to a mere function of collectivity, the psychological processes, though they still appear in each individual, have ceased to appear as the determining force of the social process. Thus the psychology of the individual has lost what Hegel would have called its

substance. It is perhaps the greatest merit of Freud's book that though he resticted him self to the fiele of individual psychology and wisely abstained from introducing sociological factors from outdide he nevertheless reached the turning point where psychology abdicates." (Adorno 1951 : 431-432).

In contrast, Herbert Marcuse's initial reaction to Adorno's doubts in "Sociologty and Psychology," was to criticise them and respond by reasserting the theory of the social in the individual :

"But the psychological approach seems to fail at a decisive point : history has progressed "behind the back" and over the individuals, and the laws of the historical process have been those governing the reified instituions rather than the individuals. (Here Marcuse footnotes Adorno 1955, the original German version of "Sociology and Psychology)" Against this criticism we have arqued that Freud's psychology reaches into a dimension of the mental apparatus where the individual is still the genus, the present still the past.....By virtue of this Generic conception, Freud's psychology of the individual is *per se* psychology of the Genus." (Marcuse 1966 : 106)

In spite of this critique of Adorno, made in 1955, by 1963 in "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man," Marcuse stated the inconsistency between traditional Freudian theory and the tools necessary to understand modern society with probably as much clarity as it could be stated at the time. He also related the inconsistency to the concept of the decline of the individual, discussing the latter in the far reaching sociological and psychological terms that it deserves. In this essay marcuse also begins, but does not clearly accomplish, the task of s parating the concept of narcissism, with the attendant notion of the obsolescence of the Freudian concept of the human being, from his critique of neo-Freudianism, which entailed precisely a defense of the traditional Freudian notion of the individual In his criginal "Preface" to *Fros and Civilization* Marcuse had glimpsed that indeed the thesis of the decline or end of the individual would have to lead to a deemphasis on the psychological interpretation of political and social theory :

"Formerly autonomous and identifiable psychic processes are being absorbed by the function of the individual in the state.....Psychological problems therefore turn into political problems.....Psychology could be elaborated as a special discipline as long as the psyche could sustain itself against the public power, as long as privacy was real, really desired and self-shaped: if the individual has neither the ability nor the possibility to be for himself, the terms of psychology become the terms

of the social forces which define the psyche. Under these circumstances applying psychology in the analysis of social and political events means taking an approach which has been vitiated by those very events." (Marcuse 1966 : XXVII)

Unfortunately, like many prefaces this statement lays out the author's future plans more than his present accomplishments. *Eros and Civilization* actually still assumes the relevance of the Freudian concept of human beings which the "Preface" seems to abjure. The "Preface" is really a better introduction to *One Dimensional Man* (Marcuse 1964), which does attempt to define the modern psyche socially more than modern society psychologically, thus abandoning the contradictory concept of a narcissism based simultaneously on the Freudian theory of the individual and on the idea that this individual has been systematically undermined.

It is true that Marcuse is not entirely clear on these points. In the "Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of Man." written between, *Eros and Civilization* and *One Dimensional Man,* he was still trying to merge Freudian stress on the individual and Frankurt theory of the decline of the individual. The merger is accomplished through the paradox that precisely the disappearance of the Freudian individual can be explained by the Freudian concept of the human being, i. e., that the disappearance of the individual can be explained by the early socialization of the individual. Yet Marcuse does not resolve question of how we would study this deindivualized individual who, through his or her early socialization is caused to become the narcissistic "mass man." However, in Marcuse's suggestion that the individual is socialized early on to become a human being of the mass, he seems to indicate a theoretical path that he might have followed if he had not written *One Dimensional Man,* a path, that as we will see, Christopher Lasch actually followed : to construct a psychological theory of mass society which justifies itself on the basis that since masses are produced by state or public intervention into the psyches of children, mass society can be understood through the study of individual psychology. But Marcuse's understanding that he could not really follow that path is shown by the following comment from the essay : "Society has surpassed the stage where psychiatric theory could elucidate the ingression of society into the mental structure of the individuals and thus reveal the mechanisms of social control in the individual." (Marcuse 1963 : 53)

It is thus clear that the theory of narcissism, far from stretching the importance of the individual, undermines it. It is thus inconsistent with the Frankfurt school principles of studying the social in the individual. Although neither Marcuse nor Adorno ever faced up to this inconsistency in a completely consistent way, still, in practice, and sometimes in theory too, as we have just seen, they modified the principle of studying the social in the individual.

These oscillations seem to illustrate the problem of any methodology that moves too quickly from analysis of social conditions to analysis of individual mental health or neurosis. Adorno's realization of this perhaps explains why he often strove for a certain pluralism on the question of the relation between studying the individual and studying society. (Adorno 1968 : 96; 1966 : 89) The lesson to be learned from this is that there is no methodology that gets adequately at both. There is no one to one correspondence between social theory and psychology. Furthermore, insofar as there is none, this raises internal problems for the Frankfurt school theory of the totally administered society, according to which it is imagined that a repressive society can almost create a personality type. such as the narcissistic one, over which it has perfect control. Since from the methodological standpoint there remains a gap between individual and society, it thus becomes much more difficult to say that any society is totally administered. 6 There is no single concept, such as narcissism, which precisely indicates both social and psychological breakdown. Such a theory will inevitably identify the individual and society too closely.

It is a paradox that it was the instinctualists in the Framkfurt school who developed this notion of the totally administered society and the revisionist Fromm, with his emphasis on the logic of society over and above the instincts, who resisted it Yet Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno also continued to have their doubts about the totally administered society, and as we will see, it was only Christopher Lasch who succumbed to the idea, and overcame all Frankfurt school doubts about the total domination of the individual psyche by society.

For all of above developments left the concept of narcissism in a kind of limbo, at least in the American context, until the work of Christopher Lasch. 7 Lasch attempted an once again unite the method of studying the social in the individual with the thesis of the decline of the individual. (Lasch 1978 : 34-36) There is, indeed, an argument that

Lasch makes which seems as though it might allow him to accomplish the task of uniting the two theories, but which in fact dose not. I am referring to his emphasis on social control of the family by the state. (Lasch 1978: 11; 1980) For if the lsrge scale social process through which narcissistic traits thrive had become increasingly substitude for socialezation by the family, then one could indeed argue that such social narcissism could be discovered by studying individual data without concentrating on the actual data of society. the argument would be that the family has been increasingly influenced by the state and that studying the individual can reveal this.

However, this argument would be an extremely naive reponse to the methodoldgical problems faced by the Frankfurt school, If one could understand such state action by looking at the psyche, then the Frankfurt school theory of the decline of the individual would be both maintained and undermined, maintained because one could understand the decline of the individual by studying the individual, undermined because one could not really learn that much by studying the psyche of someone who has been put too much under the saw of mass society to reveal any autonomous psychic processes. Although Lasch, or for that matter Horkheimer, Marcuse and Adorno, might have found some consistent combination of his defense of Freudian instinctualism with a more sociological account, it is not likely to be accomplished, as Lasch attempts, by simply repeating the illogical attack af the Frankfurt school on neo-Freudianism as an illegitimate attempt to introduce social concepts into Fread's theory. (Lasch 1978: 34-36)

Although Lasch has never been very clear about the methodological issues involved, the paradoxes that occur in his work are a logical result of his effort to develop a theory of narcissism which, in the nineteen forties, fifties and sixties, marcuse and Adorno had already developed and than abandoned as a blind alley. We have also seen marcuse asking for its replacement by a holistic account of industrial society ; I would add to marcuse's proposal that this account of industrial society should not flinch, as marcuse's did not, from examining the dependence of individuals on that society and the psychology of how that dependence manifests itself.

This marcusian direction, represented by *One Dimensional Man*, is certainly preferable to the development of a Laschian scare story about actual intervention by the state, represented by welfare

workers, etc., entering the homes and private lives of soon to be narcissistic children who would later on be examined by psychologistis who, in turn, would conclude on the basis of studying the social in the individual that these people had narcissistic personality structures and belonged to a narcissistic society. Such a mythology leads Lasch to oscillate back and forth between an individualist analysis of narcissism, based on clinical data or the psyche of public figures (the latter always a dubious proposition anyway), and an analysis of narcissism based on general social currents. (Lasch 1978 : 35-38) But Lasch never tells us, for example, what the relation is between the individual psychological data, based on middle or upper class patients, and the sociological analysis, which extends far beyond that class In contrast, both Marcuse and Adorno recognized that the theory of narcissism raised an obstacle for psychological analysis itself, a warning that Lasch did not take to heart.

Frankfurt school psychology oscillated between a vision of an individual whose character has been primarily formed by the family, and one whose character has been largely formed by the public institutions of mass industrial society. In the former case, the individual remains a fullfledged person, and the theorists of the Frankfurt school can use the method of sudying the social in the individual without falling in to contradictions. In the latter case, indivuality declines, norcissism ensues, and thus some of the Frankfurt school grounds for abjecting to the sociological psychology of people like Fromm are removed. The Frankfurt school notion of the social origins of the indvidual, when expandanded from seeing those origins in the family, to seeing them in public society, leaves little room either for a fullfledged individual or for any relatively autonomus psychology for studying narcissism.

Frankfurt school psychology never dose reveal the proper relation between social analysis and individual analysis. To accompiish this task one would have to go beyond Adornian paradox. This is not to deny that the paradoxes of Frankfurt school psychology are often extremely suggestive. Lasch's work, too, inherits some of this thematic power. For his work culminates in the essentially correct idea that narcissim, which entails increasing privatism, is mode possible in part by the growing role of the state and other forms of public power. Unfortunately, Lasch vitiates the power of his theory by first, moving arbitrarily back and forth between psychological and social and political categories and, second, relying too heavily on the thesis of actual state intervention into the family in order to justify the tight fit that he

finds between the individual and society. Hence his vision of the totally administered society is much more extreme than that of the Frankfurt school and presents less even abstract possibilities for individuals to escape from society's norms. I will now show the connection between the methodological problems in the social psycghology of narcissism, and the ethical critique of unjustified authority which dominated Frankfurt school psychology and Fromm's psychology and gets lost in Lasch.

Although I have argued that Lasch's account of narcissism in *The Culture of Narcissism* is seriously flawed, because of its exacerbation of methodological problems that beset the Frankfurt school in their attempt to create a social psychology, I have, nevertheless, treated it is basically continuing the theory of the Frankfurt school. However, already in *The Culture of Narcissism* there were other tendencies which came to fruition in *The Minimal Self* and which can only be regarded as reversing the anti-authoritarian aims of Frankfurt School psychology. Part of the problem, as it appeared in *The Culture of Narcissism*, was that Lasch took the themes of the decline of the individual and the family out of the context that they had when they worked to shed light on acceptance of fascist authority. It was, for example, in the interest of explaining the blind obedience to authority that the experience of fascism underlined as a permanent possibility in human beings, that Horkheimer developed his sociological analysis of the narcissistic personality. He argued that in a fatherless society, i. e., given the sociological assumptions of the day, a society where the family also declines because of the lessening of the father's significance, some sons will be less likely to resist fascist and consumerist manipulation and will decline in autonomy. Indeed Horkheimer may have anticipated Lasch's lament for even the older forms of authority associated with an earlier type of family. Still, when looked at in its total context Horkheimer's theory remained anti-authoritarian. (Benjamin 1977 : 54; Horkheimer 1949 : 333; Lasch 1978 : 154-186)

Certainly neither Horkheimer nor Marcuse, nor Adorno, ever assumed, as Lasch does in *The Culture of Narcissism* that their theory gave them a vantage point for criticizing allegedly neurotic anti-authoritarianism. (Lasch 1978 : 23 24) Indeed, there is a strange footnote in *The Minimal Self* in which Lasch even regrets the lack of attention paid to critiquing the superego and conservative and authoritarian Freudianism generally in *The Culture of Narcissism*. (Lasch 1984 : 286-287) However,

what is surprising is that even after making this autocritique Lasch goes on to new heights in *The Minimal Self* in eliminating the strong respect for liberty that was part and parcel of the Frankfurt school concept of narcissism.

The Minimal Self continues the naive intermingling of clinical data and sociological analysis that characterizes *The Culture of Narcissism's* assumption of a seemless web connecting society and the individual. The clinical data itself, however, is interpreted differently, and the cultural, sociological analysis has changed, indeed, has altered dramatically The clinical data found in *The Minimal Self* is interpreted much more in the light of the basictlly post-Frankfurt school theory that narcissism is a resolution of the pre-oedipal dichotomy between remaining dependent on the mother and womb or becoming independent of them, in favor of the former. 8 Furthermore, far from limiting his claims about the power of the concept of narcissism to help analyze both individual and society, Lasch now develops a new, more enccmpassing account of that relation. Claiming that the political analogue to psychological narcissism's refusal to allow separation is what he calls the party of Narcisus, Lasch now includes in this party those ecologists, peace activists, feminists, who, like their paradigm leader, Marcuse, want to extend the desire of the psychological narcissist to return to the womb and to a political perspective embracing liberation of repressed desires and empathy for what is natural. (Lasch 1984 : 234, 244-46)

That Lasch has now turned against even the Frankfurt school as represented by Marcuse is not surprising. For, first, the new interpretation of narcissism that he offers is incompatible with one aspect of the theory of narcissism common to Freud, Marcuse, Adorno and From.m For them the sociological nature of the theory of narcissism continually stretched the limits of psychological explanation. In that sense they were all revisionists and it is not surprising that Lasch castigates Marcuse for doubting the applicability of the Freudian concept of the human being in "The Obsolescence of the Freudian Concept of man". (Lasch 1984 : 233) As we saw, Marcuse's doubts were generated by his realization of the difficulty of deducing social currents from the individual narcissistic psyche. These difficulties, however, are vastly increased with Lasch's more ambitious project of proclaiming an affinity between contemporary American society and the general psychological narcissism of wanting to abolish differences between self and others; the difficulties are further

increased when not only the obviously unhealthy aspects of contemporay American society, but also also such significant world wide movements as the peace, ecology and feminist movements are not only identified in central aspects with the retreat to the pathological state of wanting to abolish differences between oneself and others, but are said to represent Marcuse's narcissistic ideal.

It may seem surprising for Lasch to accuse Marcuse of present ing a narcissistic ideal when, as we have seen, Marcuse, as Lasch himself understood, was a bitter critic of narciasism. However, Lasch is right in finding such an ideal in Marcuse, but wrong in faling to show i s exact relation to (1), the obviously unhealthy narcissism that Marcuse, Freud, Fromm, Lasch, Horkheimer and Adorno all criticise and to (2) the theory of narcissism as arising out of the pre-oedipal stage of wanting to abolish differences, which Lasch utilizes in *The Min mal Self*. It is ture that Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization* did present (3), a positive ideal of narcissism as a state in which we change our exploitative relation to nature. (Marcuse 1966 : 164) 9 This third notion of narcissism, however is clearly distinguished from (1) and certainly not explicitly based on (2). Furthermore, any argument that it is logically based on or entails (2) must proceed by naively identjfying complex social and cultural movements such as ecology with the infantile inability or unwillingness to recognize the reality of the external world By not being clear about these distinctions Lasch is able to slip from t he fact that Marcuse praises narcissism to the idea that this praise involves both a childish inability to separate one self from nature and the unhealthy narcissism of large but weak egos of which Marcuse was a bitter critic.

But Marcuse's positive ideal of narcissism has nothing to do with the notion of narcissism as involving large but weak egos discussed earlier. Nor is it clear that it has anything but superficial affinites, Logical or otherwise, with the preoedipal theory of narcissism as wanting to abolish all differences between self and world. It certainly may have some theoretical connection with t he peace, ecology and feminist movements, once both those movements and Marcuse's positive notion of a non-nature exploiting narcissism are sparated from large but weak ego narcissism and inability to distinguish the real world narcissism, then Lasch's argument against Marcuse are seen to be mainly question begging.

There is a second reason why Lasch's critique of marcuse in *The Minimal Self* is not surprising For if the theory of narcissism as

large but weak egos is seen in the context of trying to understand why people, supposedly normal as well as abnormal, accept unjustified authority, then insofar as it moved toward the pessimistic notion of a totally manipulated society, one must pose the question whether liberation from such a society is possible. Even the most conservative aspect of Frankfurt school psychology, Horkheimer's view that one could often attain greater anti-authoritarianism by internalizing the authority of the father than by simply rejecting it. is still an example of a desire to sketch some obstacle to the totally administered society. There are, however, other obstacles to anything like a totally adminisetred society which are presented by the original social theorists of narcissism, but Lasch is contemptuous of all of them, including From's ideal of following rational ethical principles which avoid either submission or domination, and marcuse's ideal of liberation from domination and exploitation of the world, an ideal which in the Frankfurt school, but not in Lasch, is strictly distinguished from the negative account of narcissism as involving as involving la ge but weak egos. (Lasch 1984 ; 228, 23:-234)$_{1}$.

Horkheimer's principle of internalization of antiauthoritarianism, Fromm's liberal psychological ethics, marcuse's utopia beyond the exacerbated conflict with nature that he finds in so much of human history, all cast doubt on the possibility of a totally administered society, a notion which suffers anyway from its grandiose pretensions of offering a one to one method of studying individual character and society. If society is completely manipulated, and if the individual fits cleanly into its seamless web, then how can one escape from it ? Thus, the Frankfurt school doubts about utilizing the theory of narcissism as large but weak egos as a completet tool for studying both individual and society are natural, given their belief that some liberation is possible, All this goes to show that the two themes that I emphasized at the beginning, Frankfurt school anti-authoritarianism, & the methodological difficulties in the concept of narcissism, go together, just as there is a link between Lasch,s naive acceptance of narcissism as showing the individual tied in a seamless web to society, and his general disinterest in the basic problematic of irrational acceptance of authority in Frankfurt school psychology.

Notes and Referances

1. For Adorno's emoirical work in the United States see Adorno et. al. 1950 and Jay 1973 : 219-252.
2. Fromm's essays from the Frankfurt school journal, the *Zeitschrift fur Sozialforschung,* are republished in Fromm 1971.
3. According to David Held (1980: 114)this essay was originally written in 1946.
4. The absolute incompatability between Frankfurt school psychology and the later work of Fromm thus must be challenged. The acerbic debate between Fromm and Marcuse created this myth, Russell Jacoby solidified it in *Social Amnesia,* and it became absolute dogma with Lasch. (Fromm 19 1 : 25-31 ; Marcuse 1966 : 238-274; Jacoby 1975 : 13-14; Lasch 1978: 31-32) However, some of the analysis in Jacoby's recent book on Otto Fenichel would seem to imply a less rigid opposition between Fromm and the Frankfurt School. (Jacoby 1983)
5. The reference to Freud's book is to *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego.*
6. For the totally administered society see Marcuse 1963 : 50.
7. For the German discussion of radical psychology sse Bopp 1979 and Mayer 1984.
8. Lasch 1984 : 166-170. Lasch also jumbled the pre-Oedipal theory and the Frankfurt theory of narcissism in *The Culture of Narcissism.* (Lasch 1978 : 36-40) However, the pre-Oedipal is not emphasied nearly as much in that book as in *The Minimal Self.* Hence Lasch's failure to be clear about the logical connection between the two theories is more troubling in the later book than in the earlier one.
9. For a discussion of Lasch and the Marcuse of *Eros and Civilization,* see Alford 1985.
10. See Fromm 1965 : 186-190. Although Fromm is not formally included in the section on the party of the ego (205-233), the pages on "Psychoanalysis and the Liberal Tradition of Moral Optimism," (208-211), combined with Lasch's reference to neo-Freudians and Fromm as clinging to a "humanitarian, reformist 'prophylactic' interpretation of the psychoanalytic mission," (236) clearly show that Lasch means to put him there.

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Collingwood and Adorno on the Popular Arts

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The similarities between R. G. Collingwood's aesthetics and the views of critical theorists on art has not, to my knowledge, been noted in the secondary litereture on either Collingwood or Critical Theory. Yet, there are interesting parallels between Collingwood's discussion of the "amusement racket" in part One of *The principles of Art* 1 and Horkheimer's and Adorno's account of the "culture industry" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and elsewhere. 2 Moreover, although Collingwood and Adorno developed very different theories of art, both operated within the dialectical tradition originating with Hegel, and both were profoundly influenced by the aesthetics of Kant and German idealism 3 From here their paths diverged. Collingwood was deeply influenced by the neo-idealistic aesthetics of Croce and Gentile, 4 while Adrono was much less influenced by Croce and almost certainly uninfluenced by Gentile. Clearly, Adorno's aesthetics can be placed within the Western Marxian tradition, 5 although Adorno was as unorthodox in his utilization of Marxism as other movements and traditions. Although Collingwood was no Marxist, he nonetheless referred favorably to Marx in *The Principles* and later writings. 6 Thus his aesthetics, while not Marxian, implicitly takes as its point of departure many of the problematics of Western Marxist aesthetic theory. As a result, it may be worthwhile to point up a number of common assumptions and a certain direction and a certain direction which Collingwood's aesthetic theory shares with Adorno's, despite their profound differences. Perhaps the strongest similarities between the two can be ascertained in their treatment of the popular artes, which both react to in a strongly negative way.

The distinction between "art proper" and amusement or entertainment art is fundamental to Collingwood's aesthetics. *The Principle af Art* was published in 1938, during a time of crisis in England and Europe generally. Collingwood's efforts in *The Principles* and succeeding works were devoted in large measure to the diagnosis of the

sources of this crisis and its possible resolution. The crisis itself was nothing less than the threat to European civilization by the Nazi barbarism. Collingwood's response to his sense of this crisis pervades all of his later work, beginning with *The Principles*, in which he analyzes the nature of amusement art in contrast to "art proper." It is in the pervasiveness of the "amusement trade" that Collingwood finds the chief symptoms of the decline of contemporary European culture. 7 And it is in his attempt to develop a conception of art out of its origins in imagination, expression and finally language that Collingwood seeks an antidote for the troubled situation of his time. Initially, then, we must set Collingwood's positive theory of art against the background of his concerns with the deleterious effects of the "culture industry" on civilized life. From this standpoint, we are in a position to comprehend his efforts to transform our conception of art and its role in contemporary society. Collingwood thus shares with Adorno a "reformative" theory of art ; both attempt to transform artistic practice through an anti-traditionalist conception of art's proper function in society. Both are opposed to the status quo (i. e., the pervasive view of the social function of the arts) in their respective conceptions of the artist's proper task, the nature of the artwork, and the place of art in cultural life, however they may differ in their views on these matters. Our concern here, however, will be with the points of agreement in their assessment of the popular arts.

Fundamental the Collingwood's theory of amusement is the distinction between a t proper and craft. 8 Art proper is essentially an expressive and imaginative activity as opposed to the result of this activity——the "bodily work of art." 9 Collingwood characterizes art proper alternatively as expression, imagination and ultimately as language as language, which are at bottom a single activity, depending on the point of view from which it is approached. The major part of *The Principles* is devoted to an elaboration of a theory of art based upon the necessary interrelationship of these concepts. For our purposes, the concept of expression is probably the most useful in grasping Collingwood's attempt to distinguish art proper from amusement. In order to understand this distinction, it is necessary to draw a further distinction...that between the expression of emotion, for which there is no technique. and its arousal or evocation in oneself and others, for which there are clearly established tehiniques or skills. 10 These techniques and skills are less a specifically formulated boby of rules than a set of guidelines common to

amusement practitioners. It is precisely because the amusement artist seeks to arouse definite emotions in his audience that Collingwood subsumes amusement art under craft, 11 Crafts, such as shipbuilding or furniture-making, consist of a group of specialized technical skills; and for each specific craft there is a corresponding set of skills in terms of which it can be characterized. These skills consist in the exercise of a set of rules which differentiate and define the craft in question.

Collingwood enumeraties several features which belong to craft as such. 12 However, we will mention just two of these features, particularly as they bear directly upon Collingwood's understanding of amusement art as a particular craft among others. First, every craft involves a relationship between means and ends: the end is the specific product which the craftsman sets out to make, such as a piece of furniture, while the means consists of the determinate actions which must be undertaken in order to realize the end. 13 Although it would appear that the end of the shoemaker consists purely in the production of shoes, Collingwood takes pains to argue that the shoemaker is ultimately aiming at the creation of a sense of satisfaction in the consumer. Thus, the arousal of certain positive emotions in the consumer of the product is the ultimate goal of the craftsman. In this respect, are proper is opposed to craft, for there is no technique for the *expression* of emotion, which is by its very nature a voyage of discovery. In exploring our emotions, there is absolutely no way to find out what they are beforehand; we must instead attempt to discover their nature solely in the act of expressing them. For the artist, the means/end distinction is inappropriate insofar as he can have no concrete idea in advance of the specific result of her expressive activity.

A second characteristic feature of craft, closely related to the first, is the relationship between planning and execution. 14 Logically, the making of an artifact or product of craft involves a plan which must precede its execution. As Collingwood notes, anyone who sets out to make a table without a detailed set of specifications, i. e., a plan, is no craftsman. Again, this distinction does not necessarily apply to art proper. Collingwood does not deny that the artist may have certain plans in creating, say, a sonnet, but he does deny that the artist can state beforehand the specifications of his work. It follows that art as such does not involve the executing a wholly specified plan any more than it involves the means/end distinction as this applies to craft.

At the same time, Collingwood does not deny thatart and craft overlap. 15 Rather, he holds that craft is not a defining characteristic of art proper, i.e, what is essential to art as such is not craft or the distinctive set of characteristics which defines a craft. As a result, Collingwood does not deny that artistic activity involves craftsmanship or even that traces of craft may be found in any and every work of art. This claim, though, dose not prevent him from finding the distinctive characteristics of "art proper" in expressive and jmaginative activity which he identifies with language cr the activity of speaking. 16

We can turn now to Collingwood's analysis of amusement art. But before characterizing amusement art as ane type of craft, it is worth noting that Collingwood also discusses magical or religious art as a second species of craft. 17 The crucial difference between amusement and magic concerns their respective functions in society. While magical art is intended to arouse emotions which overflow into the domain of parctical life, amusement art aims at insulating the audience from practical or life concerns. 18 Amusement, like magic, results from a conscious attempt on the prat of the "artist" to *evoke* emotions. But the emotions evoked by the amusement artist in an audience are intended to be enjoyed for their own sake. A "watertight bulwark" is thus established between the emotions experienced in the course of amusement, on the one hand, and those of every day life, on the other. As a result, the emotions enjoyed in amusement art are not permitted to be discharged in the affair's of practical life—at least, not if the audience is responding to the work in a "predictable" way.

Collingwood utilizes Aristotle's notion of catharsis in his account of amusement art in a novel way. Every emotion has two phases excitation and discharge. 19 An emotion may be excited either for the purpose of discharge into everyday life or it may be excited simply in order to be relished or enjoyed in its own right. The purpose of amusement art is to create a make-believe situation in which emotions are excited and discharged in the course of the audience's involvement in the make-believe situation. In this way, potentially harmful or dangerous feelings are "earthed" or grounded and thus rendered innocuous. Amusement art always utilizes an illusion of life or human affairs in which to arouse and discharge these emotions. But they must not be permitted to spill over into the affairs of practical life where they are potentially dangerous. Collingwood's claim that amusement art is necessary "illusionistic"

20 implies that there is a possibility of confusing such an illusion with the goings on real life, whereas in magical art Collingwood insists that such a mistake cannot be made. This claim is open to question on at least two counts : first, it dose not appear that all amusement art aims at the creation of dramatic illusions. For example, popular ins rumental music may amuse without setting up any kind of dramatic situation. Secondly, it is not clear why any but the most unsophisticated members of an audience enjoying a work of amusement art need be prone to conflate the "dramatic illusion" presented to it whith a "real life situation.

In the section of *The Principles* entitled "Amusement in the Modern World", Collingwood presents a bleak picture of the impact of the amusement trade on every aspect of contemporary life. 21 His assessment, in fact, is as deeply pessimistic as Horkheimer's and Adorno's in *Dialetic of Enlightenment,* although he does not stress the econcmic function of the "culture industry" in the same way as Adorno. Nor does Collingwood attempt as detailed an analysis of particular forms of amusement, such as popular music, to rival Adorno. 22 Nonetheless, in the ten pages which Collingwood devotes to amusement art he makes a number of celling, important points about its relationship to contemporary life. To begin with, Collingwood's approach to the subject is essentially historical. Collingwood sketches the role of amusement in the ancient world in order to compare it with the modern, i e., European society from the Renaissance to the midtwentieth century. 23 Despite evident disanalogies between the two historical periods. Collingwood finds a similar pattern in each. In his scenario, the ,'antiquity of antiquity" presents us with a magical art which is a vital expression of the age in which it is created. However, the magical or religious art of antiquity is gradually superseded by an amusement art in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The pivotal figure in Collingwood's account is plato who sensed a spiritual decline in his own lifetime and attempted to combat it. By the fourth century, this development became irreversible, a fact which is already implicit in Aristotle's account of tragedy as a form of amusement art. By this time, on Collingwood's view, there was no possible way to check this process of degeneration, and amusement art itself passed through a number of necessary stages in the Roman era until it was in turn superseded by the new magical art of Christianity. Collingwood's account is thus implicitly deterministic; he states plainly that once the process of decline has set in, it becomes impossible to reverse

until the society itself ceases to exist. This does not mean that the members of that society die with the death of the society...only that the dependence upon amusement as an escape from the drudgery of practical life drains the emotional energies of its members until the practical work necessary to keep it going comes to an end. Given this situation, only a revolution in religious or spiritual values is able to effect a radical change, and with such a change the entire society is transformed accordingly. The result is the emergence of a new magical art which expresses the corresponding transformation of beliefs and values in the emerging society.

Collingwood's historical reconstruction of the development of the classical world into that of a world "become Christian" is intended to serve as an analogy for his analysis of the contemporary historical situation. He finds a clear parallel between the supersession of the magical art of antiquity and that of the Middle Ages into an amusement art. The development of mythic art into the amusement art of Aristotle's time corresponds to an analogous development in the Renaissance and the following centuries. The crucial difference for Collingwood is that in the Renaissance, at the very time art freed itself from subservience to the medieval church, it gained the possibility of unleashing an artistic potential unique in European history. But this hope was never realized as artists came under the bondage first of the aristocracy and later of the middle classes. As a result, instead of art's finding a secure role in a society which encouraged its full realization, just the reverse ensued. Artists were forced to sacrifice their true vocation in order to become a function of the amusement industry as demanded by their masters. Thus, Collingwood is at pains in *The Principles* to work out a new aesthetics which was implicit in the Renaissance conception of art but never adequately realized in the following centuries. At the same time, he is concerned to attack the enslavement of art by the "culture industry" which is both a cause and symptom of the decline of contemporary Life.

At the end of his discussion, Collingwood is very ambivalent. On the one hand, he portrays the decline of contemporary society deterministically, as a historical necessity, suggesting that only the birth of a new society will lead us out of the impasse in which we find ourselves. On the other hand, he attempts to elaborate a conception of art which will free it from the amusement industry, thereby enabling it to point the way to an understanding of our predicament. Toward the end of *The*

Principles Collingwood discusses T.S. Eliot's *The Wasteland,* which he considers a paradigm case of modern art-one which unhesitatingly portrays the spiritual deterioration of our time. 24 Although Eliot is not a poet whom Adorno considers extensively, we will maintain that Adorno's defense of certain forms of contemporary art does not differ sharply from Collingwo d's. Some of the same artists admired by Adorno, such as Kafka and Beckett, would probably be admired by Collingwood for many of the same reasons. But Adorno's defense of avant garde art is based upon fundamentally different premises than Collingwood's aesthetics. It is doubtful whether Collingwood would have endorsed the avant garde with as much enthusiasm as Adorno, given his propensity to stress the historical continuity in the development of English poetry and painting.

Before turning to Adorno's critique of the culture industry, it my be useful to indicate some of the difficulties & paradoxes generated by Collingwood's account of amusement art. First, Collingwood does not merely distinguish amusement and magic from art proper. If he attempted to separate art from craft entirely, it would be impossible to understand how either amusement or magic could contain artistic elements, which it clearly does. Obviously, both amusement and magical art must be artistic-otherwise no one would ever confuse them. And, according to Collingwood, they are consistently confused by artists, critics and audiences alike. Many of shakespeare's comedies are brilliant examples ot amusement art, cleverly calculated, as Collingwood points out, to entertain an Elizabethan audience. 25 By the same token, much great religious art, such as the Parthenon, is not merely religion, but instead a combination of art and religion in which artistic motives are subordinated to religious ends. Collingwood refers to this process as the "denaturing" of artistic impulies in the interests of ulterior ends. 26 In the modern world, as opposed to the world of medieval Christianity in which religious ends predominated, the artist is obliged to sacrifice his calling in the service of the amusement trade. Thus, thegreat majority of artifacts which pass for serious art in our society are no more than works designed to please or entertain a specific audience. This is clear when we examine their social import—the ostensible audience for which they are designed can be identified as a class or subgoup within society whose cultural needs are satisfied by a very definite kind of amusement art, such as sitcoms, etc.

What requires explanation, on Collingwood's view, is how it is possible to combine in a single work both the requirements of amuse-

ment and artistic impulses. Clearly, art and amusement point in different and opposing directions : the artist seeks to explore emotions heretofore unclarified and undiscovered while the purveyor of amusement seeks to arouse or evoke emotions which are clearly undestood beforehand, and for which implicit rules and techniques exist. As a result, it is difficult to understand how Collingwood can account for the coexistence of conflicting demands or requirements in the same work, particularly as he insists that the effect upon the audience of genuine art is impossible to predict. 27 It is clear, however, the Collingwood's critics are mistaken in believing that shakespearess comedies must be examles of "high art" when their ostensible purpose is understood historically...namely that of entertaining a certain type of audience.....whether Elizabethan or modern.

If it is possible to resolve Collingwood's difficulties by showing how different and competing motives can be reconciled, namely how a purely artistic motive can co—exist with the requirement to entertain or inculcate specific practical behavior in an audience, it becomes possible to agin a fresh perspective on the history of the arts. Eirst, the distincition between "mass art" ordinarily can be understood as applying to different forms of amusement or magical art. Collingwood is puite clear in specifying that the difference between, say, popular films designed for a mass audience and elitist films designed for a smaller, generally more affluent group, has an economic or sociological basis in the different classes to which these products appeal. Elitist art is thus not intrinsically a "higher" or better kind of art despite the fact that it requires more background preparation on the part of its audience. This "education", in the case of Shakespeare, for example, is utilized in obtaining the same end(i.e, pleasure) as in the popular, frankly hedonistic arts. Thus the category of amusement...even more than magic...cuts across the distinction between differing classes in society. 28 Entertainment is the prerogative of, all, whether the public is relatively naive or sophisticated.

Similary for the distinction between the high and low arts or between works which are designated either as instances of high or low art. Thus, film, because of its tremendous resources for appealing to a mass audience, might be considered a low art in comparison to lyric poetry which presumably appeals to a narrower (often an elitist) audience. Again, a film of Bergman might be considered high art by certain critics while the films of Chaplin might be relegated to the domain of low art.

This again is an unacceptable distinction for Collingwood for much the same reasons as is the distinction between elitist and popular art. If Collingwood is right, much of what has been considered high art turns out to be a sophisticated variety of amusement or magical art. In fact, much of the world's "great art" is not art proper, as Collingwood defines it, but religious art (which is a form of magical art). In such art, however much it has become incorporated into the tradition of high art, a mixture of art and religion remains present While earlier periods regarded these works as essentially religious in nature, our age has disregarded the magical motives in favor of the artistic. As a result, even the cave paintings of Lascaux, which had a frankly magical origin, have come to be perceived purely for their artistic qualities, such as their form and expressiveness, in abstraction from their social function. 29 In this respect Collingwood is sensitive to the historical character of the concept of art itself. He takes pains to demonstrate that the modern concept of art has emerged only within the past two or three centuries and that our classification of certain works as "art" results from a historical perspective absent in earlier periods and civilizations. 30

Collingwood is not mistaken in recognizing that the "amusement trade" is ubinuitous in modern society, and that its is products are often mistaken for"art proper." Nor is he mistaken in thinking that many works traditionally assigned to the canon of high art are really works which contain amusement and/or magical elements. Moreover, his claim that such work are not "art proper" is not merely the result of his recognition that they contain craftsmanship or the exercise of technical skill, for Collingwood dose not deny that art proper also may contain an element of craft or technique. It is rather that collingwood defines "art proper" as well as amusement and magical art in terms of the artist s conscious *iutention* to achieve certain ends. In the case of art proper, this end is the exploration of certain emotions, although what these emotions are in their individuality cannot be know before the artist intiates his activity. In the case of such crafts as amusement and magic, the activity is also characterized in terms of certain ends, but these have to do with the evocation of specific emotions by preconceived means.

Heretofore we have discussed the problem of "mixedmotives" on the side of artistic production. How is it possible for the artist at one and the same time to create both art proper, which demands a process of expressing emotions whose outcome is unpredictable, and amusement,

which requirs that the artist subordinate artistic ends entirely to the production of results through the craft of evoking certain enotions? A second, very different difficulty, involves the audience's receptivity to a work of art, The question to be raised in this context is whether it is possible for a member of the audience to determine introspectively or to decide in some other manner whether her emotions are merely being evoked by a particular work of magical or amusement art or whether he is actually re-enacting or reliving the artist's experience. Collingwood quotes Coleridge with approval to the effect that we know a poet is an artist because he is capable of making his audience artists as well. This implies that the reader is able to participate in the poet's expression of feeling in such a way as to express these feelings himself. Thus, a close approximation if not a clear cut identity between poet and reader is required for the "understanding" of a poem. But a difficulty arises precisely at this point. The reader may very well be mistaken in believing that he has re-enacted the poet's emotional experience when in fact certain feelings have merely been aroused in him. What is required for Collingwood's thesis to be plausible is that there be some criterion - -introspective or phenomenological - - which will enable a receptive member of the audience to determine the precise character of his response to a work of art. Failing such a criterion, it may be impossible in many instances to clarify the nature of one's own experience of art. Tne question—am I reliving the poet's expression or are certain emotions merely being evoked in me ? —may simply be unanswerable on many occasions. This is a major shortcoming in Collingwood's account of the character of the audience's reception to works of art. 31

As we noted at the beginning, there are profound differences between Collingwood's and Adorno's aesthetics, particularly in their different accounts of the nature of the artwork. But these differences do not obliterate a common in their approach to aesthetic theory, i. e., their profound experience of the crisis of contemporary society and the function of amusement or entertainment in it. However, Adorno develops a much fuller conception of the popular arts and their role in contemporary life then dose Collingwood. This particularly true in *Dialectic of Enlightenment,* published in 1944 in German and reissued in 1967, which Adorno co-authored with max Horkenheimer. Here the two authors offer an extended treatment of the"culture industry" which they analyze in the context of a capitalistic society whose dominant concern is the maintenance of the status quo. 32 (In addition, Adorno published exten-

sively on music, partially on popular music and its destructive effects on the human psyche.)

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, the term "culture industry" is not intended to refer to model of production analogous to industry in the strict sense, such as manufacturing, etc., in which there is complete mechanization. 33 Nonetheless, one to the central features of the artistic products of the culture industry is *standardization*: the mass media, including film, popular music, and television, turn out commodities which are as interchangeable and uniform as industrial products, such as automobile parts. 34 They are as marketable as any commodity which is subject to the control of individuals and groups for the end of profit. At the same time, they serve the function of sustaining the status quo...they are deliberately designed to increase subjection to the structure and goals of capitalist society.35 While authentic works of art are*also* commodities, in contemporary society they have become commodities through and through... consider the case of Andy Warhol whose art is not merely preocupied with commodities but who selfconsciously creates his work in order for it to be consumed as a commodity.

Adorno and Horkheimer view the social need for the culture industry in much the same way that Collingwood views the need for amusement art. For Collingwood, the drudgery of everyday work is pervas.ve in our society; as a result, there is a *universal* agreement that compensation in the form of amusement is absolutely essential in order to make life bearable to the masses. However, Collingwood maintains that amusement merely drains the emotional energy available for practical life by arousing and discharging emotions in the course of one's enjoyment of amusement art. Thus, amusement is more and more destructive insofar as it siphons off the emotional reserves necessary for the healthy maintenance of everyday affairs. This psychological account is partially shared by Adorno and Horkheimer, who view popular culture as an escape—fun, relaxation and relief from the demands and effort required by attention to g nuine works of art. But, although a television show, for example, enables boredom to be temporarily alleviated without concentrated effort, the sheer repetitiveness of the products of the culture industry anesthetize the viewer's consciousness and dull her perception. As a result, both Collingwood and Adorno take a sharply negative view of the effects of the products of popular culture on its audience.

For Adorno and Horkheimer, cultural products are the result of demands which are evoked and manipulated by the culture industry.

For this reason they do not employ the term "popular culture" because such culture does not arise spontaneously from the people as did folk art when it was a genuine expression of a community's life. However, the authors do not hold a "conspiratorial" view of the culture industry either; instead they see it as the necessary outcome of the development of advanced capitalism, a stage in which the rationalization and mechanization of everyday life has reached the point where the individual's ability to think & judge for herself has been virtually obliterated. Thus, the producers and participants(actors directors etc.) of the culture industry are as much victimized by its manipulative character as the audience which requires it as a kind of opiate to dull the pain of everyday existence.

In contrast to the products of the culture industry is the institution of autonomous art, that is, an art freed from the requirements of commercialization. Adorno locates autonomous art most clearly in the avant garde, and its most important works in the literature af Kafka and Beckett and the music of Schoenberg and the atonal school. These works, by their very unpopularity, attest to the character of modern life in its alienation and suffering. Autonomous art and popular art are thus irreconcilable exremes, for popular art attempts to escape the existential implications of contempoary life while autonomous art, particularly such avant grade compositions as Schoenberg's "Survivor from Warsaw", faces up to the terrors which characterize life in the present age. Autonomous art thus contradicts the prevailing forms of consciousness, thereby acquiring emancipatory potential. For Adorno, art's emancipatory potential, its capacity to free us from the bonds of the unfreedoms which dominate contemporary society, is one of its most important features. For this reason, he considers autonomous art to be "functionless" in the sense that it defies the norms of society by refusing to be integrated in to them Thus, serious art is anti utilitarian an the sense of declining to serve the purposes of the culture industry and its consumers. In a deeper sense, however, it is not functionless at all, simply by virtue of its emancipatory potential Its very existence is a rebuke and implicit critique of the "untruth" of contemporary society.

The production of autonomous art, according to Adorno, proceeds according to standard which derive from the laws of form and artistic technique. Although Adorno does not fully clarify these notions, they can presumably be verified through a study of different arts and

artistic forms. Thus a study the history of European music from the eighteenth century to the present will reveal a dialectical development in which musical forms & techniques are understood to evolve logically... according to a dynamic of their own. Implicit in Adorno's discussion are the notions of creativity and innovation in contrast to the uniformity and mechanization which characterize the products of the culture industry. Adorno further maintains, in a formalistic fashion, that genuine art possesses something akin to an organic unity. In listening to a sonata of Beethoven, one is able to grasp the distinctive relationship of whole to parts. Unlike popular music, which has no staucture beyond the repetitiveness of a particular formula, serious music is an integrated whole to which each part makes a unique and distinctive contribution Thus the listener is required to expand a concentrated effort in attempting to comprehend serious music, for each detail of a work can be understood only in its unique relationship to the whole. By contrast, in popular music the distinction between whole and part is irrelevant, for the "whole" is nothing more than the repetition of its parts.

Autonomous art and the products of the culture industry are thus diametrical opposites, but autonomous art has been progressively weakened by the culture industry which produces its wares solely for mass consumption. As a result, the consumer is progressively absorbed by the culture industry which undermines validity of autonomous art as the distance between the two (autonomous art and popular art) grows ever more profound. As we have seen, the contrast between the two is illustrated in Adorno's discussion of the differences between serious and popular music, a contrast which can probably be extended to most of the other arts. We will summarize Adorno's position, first, by considering the nature of the production and composition of serious and popular music and, second, the differences in response or audience reception to them.

Adorno's account of the structure of production and composition is formalistic in character. In serious music, he claims, every part of a composition depends for its musical import on the concrete totality—never on a mere enforcement of a musical scheme. Thus, details cannot be changed without altering the significance of the whole; details virtually anticipate and even contain the whole, In addition, a consistency is maintained between formal structure and content (musical themes) which are tightly interwoven with the whole and carefully developed. By

contrast, popular music is highly stylized, musical compositions follow familiar patterns and little originality is introduced As a result, the structure of the whole does not depend upon details, nor is it altered by individual details which are substitutable and serve their function as cogs in machines. It follows that complications have no effect on the structure of the work; they do not develop themes but merely stress individual "effects" such as beat or rhythm. Thus, popular music affirms conventional norms of what constitutes intelligibility in music while appearing (falsely) novel and original.

Corresponding to differences in production and composition are differences in audience reception. The hallmark of our reception of serious music is the effort and concentration required in order to follow it. This in turn results from the character of the music itself—to understand a piece of serious music one must experience the whole of it. Thus, themes and details can only be comprehended in the context of the whole, which has a strong impact on our reaction to details. Moreover, the continum of everyday life is disrupted by truly serious music which encourages our sense of social tensions and contradictions. Popular music, on the other hand, requires little effort in order to be followed. It is standardized into easily recognizable types, known prior to reception, so that the audience has ready-made models under which its experiences can be subsumed. Formally, the whole has little influence on the reception and reaction to parts—what matters is style, rhythm, beat, etc. The most successful, best music is identified with the most often repeated which renders unnecessary th process of thinking. Popular music has a "soporific effect" on social consciousness; it reinforces a sense of continuity in everyday living while its static structure enforces forgetfulness, i. e., it permits us to escape the antinomies of social reality. As a result, Adorno maintains that the autonomy of music is vanishing. "Music today is largely a social cement."

Collingwood and Adorno differ fundamentally in their analyses of the relationship between serious and popular art. Collingwood, we have seen, identifies "art proper" with expression and serious art with a development of our expressive capacity to the level in which it is sufficiently complex to give rise to "works of art". By contrast, amusement or entertainment involves a technical skill arousing specific emotions which the audience enjoys for their own sake. Collingwood's categories are therefore essentially subjectivistic : in order to make them work, it is necessary

to appeal to introspection or, phenomenologically, to different activities and functions of consciousness. Insofar as this gives rise to difficulties, Collingwood's enterprise is problematic and the application of his categories is accordingly unclear. Nevertheless, he does provide insight into what is commonly considered "high art" by showing that it is in many instances infected with traces of amusement, Moreover, his distinction between amusement and magical art is useful in calling our attention to the different functions which art has played historically.

Adorno, as we have seen, attacks the problem between serious and popular art through formalist categories, such as whole and part, concrete totality and detail. In so doing, he both transforms the terms of the problem as understood by Collingwood and further elaborates the differences between "classical" and non-classical art, particularly in the domain of music. We may note that approximately half of Adorno's total oeuvre was devoted to musical aesthetics and criticism. For this reason, it is appropriate to look to several of Adorno's discussions on the production and reception of music in order to understand his position on this problem. At the same time, there is some risk that the characteristics which differentiate serious from popular music are distinctive to that art form and cannot be generalized successfully to other areas such as literature or painting. Even if such were the case, the key categories of Adorno's approach, including the relationship of whole to part in artworks, the distinction between attentive and inattentive listening and the kind of understanding which each gives rise to, appear fundamental to any full-blown treatment of these topics. In addition, Adorno has contributed valuably in his discussion of standardization and the interchangeability of parts which characterizes popular music. It may well be that standardization and pseudo-individuality define the products of the culture industry more generally, including Gothic novels, television sitcoms, among a wide range of phenomena-but this remains to be investigated.

Finally; and perhaps most importantly, both Collingwood and Adorno view serious art as a vehicle for acquiring a deeper insight into social conditions, particularly into the disorders and contradictions of contemporary life. While Adorno extols the work of such writers as Kafka and Beckett, Collingwood considers T. S. Eliot's *The Wasteland* a paradigm case of modern art. And although Collingwood does not seize upon the contradictions of *capitalist* society as a means of singling out the decadence of modern life, his diagnosis of a society in decline parallels

Adorno's Moreover, Collingwood looks to the emancipatory potential of art both for an understanding of the contemporary condition as well as for its possible remedy in the construction of a new social order, however unclearly defined. The social and political order foreseen by Adorno is less vague than Collingwood, one in which social contradictions might be overcome and human beings reconciled with the natural order. Beneath the surface, then, the starting points as well as the conclusions reached by the two writers are similar in important respects.

Notes and Referances

1. Oxford U. P., 1938. Hereafter cited as *PA*.
2. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, New York 1987, pp. 120-168. The original edition was published in 1944. Hereafter cited as *DE* Also see Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, London, 1974.
3. This is evident in Collingwood's writings beginning with *Speculum Mentis* (Oxford, 1924) as well as in *PA*, pp. 186-188. For Adorno, see *Aesthetic Theory* (New york, 1984) for numerous references to Kant and Hegel.
4. The clearest statement of Collingwood's indebtedness to the aesthetics af Italian idealism can be found in Merle E. Brown, *Neo-Ideal Aestheics: Croce-Gentile-Collingwood* (Detroit, 1966). However, Croce's influence on Collingwood has been overexaggerated by Alan Donegan, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art", *Philosophy* (Spring, 1985), pp. 162-7 and by john Hospers, "The Croce-Collingwood Theory of Art", *Philosophy* (October, 1956). pp. 291-308.
5. Although not to the same extent as Marcuse's and some other members of the Erankfurt school. For a useful summary of Adorno's relationship to Marxism, see the Introductian and Chapter 3 of Martin Jay's *Adorno* (Cambridge. 1984).
6. Collingwood was ambivalent toward marx in his later writings, but expressed admiration for marx as a "fighter" in *An Autobiography* (Oxford, 1938). References to marxism in *PA* are generally favorable Cf. pp. 71, 178.
7. *PA*, pp. 94-104.
8. *PA*, Book I, Chapter 2.

9. *PA*, pp. 305-8.
10 *PA*, pp. 15-36.
11 *PA*, Book I, Chapter 5.
12. *PA*, pp. 15-7, 20-1
13. *PA*, p. 15.
14. *PA*, pp. 15-6.
15. *PA*, p. 22 note 1; pp. 23-9.
16. This is the major thesis of *PA*. Cf. Book III, Chapter 12, entitled "Art as Language", pp. 273-86.
17. Book 1, Chapter 4, "Art as Magic", pp. 57-78.
18. *PA*, pp. 78-84.
19. *PA*, p. 78.
20 *PA*, p. 79.
21. *PA*, p.94-104.
22. Adorno wrote numerous books and articles on the subject of music, including popular music. A useful starting point for his discussion of popular music is *Introduction to the Sociology of music* (New york, 1988), pp. 21-39. It is worth noting that over half of Adorno's total work was dedicated to the aesthetics' sociology and criticism of music and musicians.
23. *PA*, pp.97-99.
24. *PA*, pp 29, 310, 333-5
25. *PA*, pp. 87, 124.
26. *PA*, pp. 33-4.
27. *PA*, pp. 32-6.
28. *PA*, pp. 84-94.
22. PA, p. 10.
30. P. pp. 5-9
31. A valuable discussion of the difficulties involved in accounting for the audience's re-living of the artist's emotions can found in Francis Sparshott, *The Theory of the Arts* (Princeton, 1982), pp. 340-6. Sparshott's critique of "The Expressive Line" (pp. 303-81) and in particular of Collingwood's version of it (pp. 325-45) is the most useful account which I have discovered.
32. An important excerpt from *DE* on this subject is contained in *An Anthology of Western Marxism*, ed. Roger S. Gottlieb (Oxford, 1989), pp. 179-93.
33. *DE*, p. 121.
34. *DE*, pp. 120-4.
35. *DE*, pp. 120-168.

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BOOK REVIEWS

T. W. ADORNO. *Aesthetic Theory*. Translated by C. Lenhardt. Edited by Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, Pp x + 526.

Aesthetics has become a central area for Marxist thought in twentieth-century Europe. Among prominent Western Marxist philosophers the names of Georg Lukacs, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Theodor W. Adorno immediately come to mind. It is not clear, however, whether Marxist thought has entered the mainstream of contemporary Western aesthetics. In addition to unavoidable politico-economic barriers, a blockade of ignorance and hostility has prevailed between Anglo-American and Continental philosophy. Although less rigid in aesthetics than in philosophy of science, this blockade has often prevented productive dialogue between Western Marxists and leading figures in Anglo-American aesthetics. As the blockade relaxes, one can expect such dialogue to grow, even though Lukacs, Sartre, and Adorno have died.

Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* is perhaps the most original attempt at a comprehensive philosophy of the arts within the Western Marxist tradition. For the Frankfrut School (Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Adorno, Jurgen Habermas), this book constitutes a *summa aesthetica*. An English translation has long been overdue. First published in German in 1970 one year after Adorno's death the book soon appeared in French (1974) and Italian (1975). For years it has been dabated and used on the European continent. Until recently, however, *Aesthetic Theory* has received little attention in the English speaking world. The publication of Lenhardt's translation in 1984 makes a wider reception possible.

This reception will not be easy or smooth. The book is complex and provocative, just as its author was brilliant and controversial. An Hegelian Marxist critical of both Hegel and Marxist-Leninism; an assimilated German Jew exiled for more than fifteen years in England and the United States; a polished modern musician who subjected Schoenberg and Stravinsky to ideology critique; a sophisticated philosopher better known for his work in sociology, psychology, and communications than for his studies of Hegel, Kierkegaard, Husserl, and Heidegger—Adorno was as complex as his published work, which fills some 20 volumes of *Gesammelte Schriften*. According to Martin Jay, Adorno's writings occupy

an historical force field. The field includes Western Marxism, aesthetic modernism, mandarin cultural despair, and Jewish self-identification, as well as the more anticipatory pull of deconstructionism (*Adorno*, Harvard University Press, 1984 p. 22). No one force dominates Adorno's work. The forces exist in creative tension. In *Aesthetic Theory* they become explosive.

This explosive character carries over into the smallest details of organization and style. The "Editor's Epilogue" (493-498) tells of Adorno's determined efforts to match form and content. Although his duty prevented a final revision, the editors have tried to honor Adorno's intent. The result is a paratactical text containing 12 chapters and 168 sections. Many suppressed premises are left for the reader to figure out. Some help in this task comes from the "Draft" Introduction" (456-492), which presents Adorno's leading concerns. Even so, Adorno's thoroughly dialectical method makes a first reading difficult. Fortunately Christian Lenhardt's translation is outstanding. Lenhardt has captured Adorno's gist in idiomatic English without missing crucial nuances. Lenhardt has also broken the original single-paragraph sections into smaller paragraphs and supplied additional endnotes, thus making the book less formidable. It is unfortunate, however, that the translator has not been allowed to include a glossary and an introduction. These would have provided helpful entries into the text.

Adorno's aesthetics turns on a central conflict and follows a specific methodological principle. The conflict is one between modern art and advanced capitalism. Adorno's methodological principle is "to shed light on all art from the perspective of the most recent artistic phenomena..." (491-492). Interpreting modern art as the "social' antithesis" of advanced capitalist society, Adorno generates a general thesis about the arts: they derive from a larger social process, oppose it, point beyond it, and yet remain within that process. Chapters 1 and 12 try to show how art simulataneously "dissociate itself" from society and "belongs to" it (358). In these chapters Adorno solidifies his positions about art's connections with politics, ideology, and social production.

Adorno's approach to "modern art" (Picasso, Schoenberg, Beckett) is both controversial and original. Unlike Georg Lukacs, Adorno, defends modern art. Unlike the view sometimes attributed to Adorno, however, his defense is critical rather than apologetic. This defense assumes a dialectic between modern art and so-called popular art. Chapter

2 portrays modern art as providing a partial corrective to the ideological functions of "popular art." But "because modern art also has ideological functions, Adorno says "it becomes impossible to criticize the culture industry without criticizing art at the same time" (26). Furthermore, within modern art Adorno distinguishes between authentic and inauthentic works.

This distinction employs the category of artistic truth-content *(Wahrheitsgehalt)*. Like many other Adornian categories, "truth-content" arises from his reading traditional aesthetic through the eyes of twentieth-century art. Because of vast discrepancies between the two, Adorno holds that "there is only one way in which aesthetics can hope to understand art today, and that is through critical self-reflection" (p. 467). His main sources within aesthetics are Kant and Hegel, mediated by Marx and Nietzsche, and brought closer still by Lukacs and Walter Benjamin. Adorno's critical appropriation of traditional German aesthetics is most evident in Chapters 6, 7 and 9 which concern artistic illusion *(Schein)*, truth, and objectivity. In these chapters Adorno tries to move beyond Hegel and Kant by using each to correct the other. Thus, for example, Adorno combines a Hegelian notion of art as truth's semblance with a Kantian emphasis on the indeterminacy of specific works. Adorno also uses Hegel's emphasis on artistic production to correct Kant's notion of taste, but criticizes both authors for misreading the collective subjectivity expressed in authentic works of art. A similar treatment of Nietzsche and Marx occurs in the chapters on "beauty" (Chapters 3-5). Here a Nietzschean dialectic of Apollo and Dionysus undermines Marx's emphasis on rational mastery over nature, while Marxian categories counteract aesthetic irrationalism. In general Adorno appropriates traditional German aesthetics in order to determine the significance of modern art within a capitalist society.

Although not well-versed in English language aesthetics, Adorno does undertake a type of metacriticism. Concepts of art criticism such as form and intention are analyzed in Chapter 8, and categories of art historiography such as genre and style are examined in Chapter 11. Crucial for both chapters is the theory of the artwork presented in Chapter 10. Adorno describes the work of art as a sociohistorical monad that calls for immanent criticism. Works of art are "monads" in the sense that their internal tensions express the conflicts driving their society. In authentic modern works human suffering is

voiced, and necessary transformations of society are made imaginable. Such works call for neither the purely immanent analysis of formalist approaches nor the purely transcendent evaluation of some ideology critiques. The task of immanent criticism is to evaluate works from within but simultaneously to assess their sociohistorical significance.

Three objections to *Aesthetic Theory* have been raised by sympathetic critics. One is that Adorno's defense of modern art amounts to a retreat from any struggle for social transformation. It is said that Adorno thinks only certain politically ineffectual works can provide an agent for social transformation. A second objection is that Adorno's reflections have become so abstract that they resist concrete testing. A third is that important changes in recent art have been ignored.

Initially each objection is plausible. Further reflection might show, however, that each is also problematic. The locating of agents for social transformation, for example, is extremely complex, as is Adorno's position on art's role in this process. When thought through the criticism of Adorno's "abstractness" usually amounts to a rejection of philosophical aesthetics as such. Seen within the tradition of German aesthetics, however, *Aesthetic Theory* displays an unusual engagement with the art of its own time. Criticisms of Adorno's outdatedness might also be problematic, for seldom do they explicate criteria for assessing the significance of changes within art.

There is one recurrent objection, however, that might signal a central problem. This objection concerns Adorno's method of reading art backwards. Adorno never fully explains and justifies his methodological principle. He claims instead that a method of interpreting artistic phenomena is "legitimated in its actual use, which is why it cannot be presupposed" (489). The problem with this claim is that the "legitimate" use of a method does not provide a philosophical rationale for that method. In his attempt to correct abstract methodologies whose methods are seldom put to legitimate use, Adorno fails to elaborate sufficiently the methodology attached to his own methods of interpretation. Unsympathetic critics could easily see this failure as a fatal flaw.

That objection aside, I find *Aesthetic Theory* to be one of the most exciting and challenging works in post-war German aesthetics. Aligning aesthetics with recent art and social issues is difficult in any language. By taking on this task without flinching, Adorno has made an important contribution to contemporary philosophy of art.

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Martin Jay, *Adorno*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984. Pp. 199.

Writing in the summer of 1966, Adorno ended the preface of his ***Negative Dialectics*** with the declaration : "The author is prepared for the attacks to which ***Negative Dialectics*** will expose him. He feels no rancor and does not bergrudge the joy of those in either camp who will proclaim they knew it all the time and now he was confessing. "[New York, 1973, p. xxi] Those two sentences suggest not so much a man with Socratic patience facing his accusors, as a man both embattled and beleaguered. Indeed, Adorno was a cultural critic at war with the two cultures in which he lived, and a philosopher in disagreement with the traditions of German philosophy and with the representatives of modern philosophical thought. He even broke on important points with his closest associates, Max Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin. And it is this man, whose philosophy was marked at once by extreme subtlety and by hardnosed intransigence, who is portrayed with great vitality by Martin Jay in ***Adorno***. In Jay's portrait, Adorno's very intransigence becomes a virtue. for it stands as a figure for Adorno's model of the final irreconciliability of moments in dialectics. Adorno liked to speak of a "force-field," which suggested an interaction between the elements analyzed by philosophy—never unification. And Martin Jay envisioned his study of Adorno's thought as a map of just such a force-field, recognizing the irreconcilable of Adorno's work: "To reveal as best we can the unique phenomenon that was Adorno, we must therefore conceptualize him in a manner which will be as true to the unresolved tensions in his thought as possible, rather than seek to find some putative coherence underlying them. "[p. 23] But despite this proviso, Jay's book is an elegant introduction to Adorno's ideas, and at the same it provides a lively sketch of a sensibility. More than that, Jay has succeeded in establishing Adorno —a man who was at war with everyone— not only as a profound thinker but also as an extremely attractive one.

In the crowd around the institute of Social Research, Adorno was a polymath. Jay describes him as "a virtual microcosm of the Institute's combined staff. "[p. 86] And Jay discusses a number of Adorno's major interests, such as his cultural criticism, possibly best represented by the joint book with Horkheimer, ***The Dialectic of Enlightenment***, his work with psychoanalytic concepts, and his aesthetic theory. The man who wrote on Schoenberg and Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard and Kafka, Beckett

and Balzac is clearly present in Jay's book. But Jay emphasizes most Adorno's "negative dialectics," which he traces from an incipient state in Adorno's early to the publication in 1966 of ***Negative Dialectics***. As a negative dialectician, Jay's Adorno stands firmly against totalization in philosophy, and more specifically against the totalization represented by Hegel's dialectics. It is Adorno's resistance to totalization which separates him from most of his fellow Marxists. Although Adorno—with the rest of the Frankfurt School—has often been associated with Western Marxism because of his dialectical turn, Jay points out that Adorno's negative version of dialectics "prevented him from embracing the Marxist Humanist conclusion reached by Lukacs, Gramsci and Korsch. "[p. 85] But if Jay's Adorno was an outsider with regard to Marxist Humanism, he could be embraced by today's post-structuralist as an insider. Jay's book establishes Adorno as one of the pioneers of the antitotalization of the presentday deconstructionist, even if Jay turns to terms like "proto-deconstructionist" only occasionally in his text. In not pressing the point too hard, Jay probably sensed that Adorno himself would have been uncomfortable as an insider in deconstructionist criticism. Jay, in fact, writes that it is "misleading to argue, as some commentators, that he was ***really*** a mandarin pretending to be a Marxist or simply a deconstructionist ***avant la lettre***. We must rather, in a way that is more in accord with the deepest impulses of his own approach, understand him as the shifting nodal point in which all intersect. "[pp. 22-23] And Jay, who writes affectionately of the redemotive side of Adorno's cultural criticism, is fully aware that any simple identification of Adorno with deconstructionism is misplaced. Thus, rather than making Adorno merely into a patron saint of deconstruction, Jay identifies those aspects of Adorno's thought which prefigure important aspects of deconstruction.

According to Jay, the common ancestor of the antitotalization of Adorno and Derrida is Friedrich Nietzsche; and Nietzsche makes frequent appearances in Jay's book. Nietzsche's role is primarily as an influence on Adorno's "negative dialectics." But Nietzsche, I would suggest, had an impact on more than Adorno's ideas; he also greatly influenced Adorno's intellectual style. The Adorno portrayed by Martin Jay is deeply serious, fully worthy of the contemplative portrait reproduced on the cover of ***Adorno***. But as serious he was, Adorno was also given to a playful wickedness in his writing, a playful wickedness which resembles

Nietzsche's. When one reads Adorno's discussions of American mas culture, the imprint of Nietzsche is clear. Without question, the clever Adorno talking about the "maestro" in the American concert hall should be located on a genealogical line that runs from Nietzsche to Roland Barthes. There are other aspects of Adorno's intellectual style which might have added to Jay's picture, such as Adorno's commitment to some of the values of the German professoriate. Although Jay acknowledges Adorno's mandarinism, he is compelled more often to defend Adorno against those who read his cultural criticism as little more than the cranky and snobbish posturing of a mandarin. Still, Adorno's cultural elitism—which is evidenced by his prose, by most of his cultural attachments, by his attacks on jazz and other expressions of mass culture—cannot be dissociated from the mandarinism of the German academic. Jay may be correct in protecting Adorno from his detractors, but a discussion of the interaction between Adorno's thought and the values of the German academy would have added to the complex picture which Jay produced of so complex a man as Theodor Adorno.

Jay's *Adorno* was clearly written with affection and reverence for one of the most difficult thinkers of the wentieth century. But it was also written with analytical energy and critical insight. What *Adorno* does for Adorno is to reproduce the vitality of his thought, or more accurately, its passion. As it turns out, it is not Jay's biographical discussion of Adorno which brings the thinker back to life, but rather the sensitive treatment Jay gave to Adorno's ideas

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Barry M. Katz. *Herbert Marcuse and the Art of Liberation.* Verso Editions, London, 234pp.

Katz's study of Marcuse is an intellectual biography, authorised by Marcuse, and based not merely on a detailed investigation of his writings but also on intensive discussions with Marcuse himself. It can thus be considered definitive in its biographical features. However, Katz has forsaken criticism at the expense of an elucidation of Marcuse's life and teachings; as a result, the book impresses the reader for the depth of its biographical detail and for its clear explanations of the orgins of Marcuse's doctrines rather than for any critical analysis of them.

Katz traces Marcuse's sixty year career from its origins in Berlin at the beginning of the century to 1979, the year of Marcuse's death. Although

there is no single turning point in Marcuse's career, Katz maintains that a preoccupation with aesthetics constitutes the single most consistent theme running through the whole of Marcuse's work. Thus the author argues that aesthetic theory serves as the framework within which Marcuse's philosophical and political work can be integrated. From his 1922 doctoral dissertation on the German "artist-novel" through to his extended essay of 1967 on ***The Aesthetic Dimension***, Katz shows that Marcuse attempted to lay the groundwork of a theory of art that was also a theory of politics and an enduring standard of political criticism. As a result, Katz ties his discussions of such diverse writings as ***Reason and Revolution***, ***Eros and Civilization*** and ***One-Dimensional Man*** to Marcuse's continuing preoccupation with art and its nature.

According to Katz, the basic problem with which Marcuse grappled during his life concerned the autonomy of art in relation to the external world, and his position shifted according to his perceptions of the power of the established reality to absorb, co-opt, or defuse the radical alienation that distances the art work from society. During the fascist period, when he contributed to the articulation of the theoretical position of the Frankfurt School, and into the period of "one-dimensional society", Marcuse tended to be impressed by the power of advanced industrial society to transform even its most intractable critics into affirmations of the prevailing order. By the end of his life, however, in his critique of deterministic Marxist aesthetics, he returned to his original position that it is of the essence of the artwork to preserve an element of transcendence which can never be negated. This element, Marcuse maintained in ***The Aesthetics of Liberation***, is artistic form which endures as an implicit criticism of the oppressive conditions on contemporary civilization.

Katz's study is invaluable for the reader who wishes to understand Marcuse's philosophical views in their social and historical setting. He is most successful in conveying a sense of the historical context in which Marcuse's social theories evolved and matured in relationship to the constantly changing conditions in which he lived.

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Martin Scofield, *T. S. Eliot : The Poems*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 264.

Scofield's method of interpreting Eliotspoetry will be highly useful to both students and general readers. Such a method is based on uncanny power of perception and analysis and the profound understanding of heterogeneous aspects of an encyclopaedic mind. Scofield finds in Eliot a 'compound ghost', a writer compounded out of many elements of the European tradition.

Quite incisively, the author examines the various strands that are connected with the development of Eliot's oeuvere, and more succintly to his life and a wider area of philosophical and religious inquiry. He traces, at the same time, the development of the poet's mind with a remarkable clarity, Particularly, the fourth chapter "Poetic Theory and Poetic Practice" reveals the way in which Eliot's literary criticism is largely consequence of his creative activity. Eliot confesses that his best criticism consists of the essays written on poets and Poetic dramatists. Thus, it was a 'by-product' of his 'private poetry-workshop'. On the other hand, in his negative judgments on some writers, he pointed to the qualities which he wished to avoid.

The book gains its significance in its concentration on Eliot's poetry itself; in it's attempt to unravel the wealth of hidden meanings in the poems. Most of the sections deal with an elaborate discussion of each major poem or group of poems. The author arrives at the structure of meanings of these poems though Eliot's techniques of personal or masks, his use of musical effects, his symbolism and imagism, and more over, the less hinted elements such as surrealism. While interpreting *The Wastland*, the author is chiefly concerned with the continual interaction between the forces of fragmentation and those of unification. In is study of *Four Quartets*, he is similarly preoccupied with a fundamental aspect of Eliot as a poet : "the question of how much our response to his poetry depends on our response to his beliefs." The author's laudable attempt to clarify the oscurities, to explain the allusions, serves to provide a comprehensive and stimulating introduction to T. S. Eliot's poetry.

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Ellen Dissanayake, *What Is Art For ?* Seattle : University of Washington Press, 1988. Pp. xv+249, $ 20.00.

The author begins by declaring

that her analysis of art will take a "biobehavioral" perspective rooted in Edward O. Wilson's sociobiology (1975, 1978). She thus assumes that "certain ubiquitous behavioral features or tendencies in human life are an intrinsic, relatively unchangeable part of our nature and have arisen and been retained because they contributed positively to our evolutionary success" (p 19). She defines "art" not as those select categories of objects or performances which a mordern critic might choose but instead as all those varied behaviors by which human beings attempt "to form and shape, to make things special, to decorate or beautify, to single out and take pains to present something in a considered way" (p. 61). Finding on review of the ethnographic literature that such behaviour is universal in humans, she assumes that it must have contributed positively to our species's survival and sets out both to trace the prehistoric sources of artistic behavior and to answer the query on the title page – or, more accurately, to determine what art was for in terms of natural selection during the long course of hominid evolution. Her conclusion: that the arts and human aesthetic response had survival value because, being pleasurable, they encouraged early humans to engage regularly in group activities to which they were attached, such as rituals and ceremonies, and these in turn helped promote group solidarity. In a concluding chapter, she argues that in the modern West the arts no longer serve that crucial collective fuction, but have instead become the province of a specialized few who substitute detachment for genuine response and the slippery terrain of "deconstruction" for consensual meanings. She deplores this situation as "unnatural" in that it departs from the scenario she has just limned: "what the arts were for, an embodiment and reinforcement of socially shared significance, is what we crave and are perishing for today" (p. 200).

Along the way, Dissanayake offers much of charm and Interest. In the first place, her topic—the place of art and the aesthetic response in human evolution—is an important one. While numerous anthropologists, art historians and aestheticians have "talked around" the issue, it has probably not been afforded such undivided attention since nineteenth-century evolutionists like Balfour and Haddon turned their attention to art, working, of course, without benefit of modern genetics, archaeology, and ethnography. Her interpretation of Wilson is so nondoctrinaire and commonsensical, so affirmative of human unity and potential, that it will seem largely inoffensive to even the most intransigient of those "sensitive, well-educated social scientists

and humanist" opposed to sociobiology (p. 32) whom she sets up as her putative theoretical foes. And in the third place, her account balances re-statements of valuable truths, like the intimate connection between ritual, play, and art, with fresh insights like a usuful distinction between two kinds of art appreciation: "ecstatic" response to the sensual aspects of a work, and what she terms "aesthetic" response to its manipulations of particular artistic "codes" or conventions (p. 164). For such contributions, and for a clear, jargonfree style of writing that made me want to "buy" her arguments even when I disagreed, one can only be grateful.

But there are problems with the work—problems significant enough to make the thoughtful reader regard Dissanayake's conclusions with caution. First, she makes statements that are, at the very least, open to empirical question. For example, she refers to "dogs or sheep, which have been domesticated at least as long as human beings have been 'cultured,'" (p. 29), implying that pre-Neolithic man lacked culture and/or that the domestication of animals might precade the onset of human culture — both thoroughly untenable propositions. Elsewhere she asserts that "the behavior of animals is largely determined by genetically controlled mechanisms, so that their responses are more or less automatic" (p. 119) —a baffling statement from an ethologist, since current animal research suggests quite the contrary (see Cowley 1988).

As for humans, Dissanayake endows them with contradictory "instincts" a common pitfall among those who seek biological blueprints to the explain the species that in a single century has brought us Babi Yar and the Salk-Sabine vaccine, Idi Amin and Mahatma Gandhi. On one page she describes human as 'conspicuously unwilling to love or try to understand their neighbors" (p. 30), and on the next, as possessing a "universally observed penchant for actively seeking out and enjoying the company of others of one's kind" (p. 31)' Quick to assume that widespread behaviors are universal, she ignores obvious exceptions; thus "the infant's smile... 'releases' protective and fond emotion in whoever witnesses it," an evolutionary imperative that was apparently lost on Nazj soldiers as they herded Jewish mothers and babies to their deaths. Another "universal behavior" which she cites as "human nature" is "investing power in those of greater age" (p. 21)—an arguable trait at best, given a vast literature on the subordination of the aged in industrial society (e. g., Ewen 1976) and

in many traditional societies (e.g., Amoss and Harrel 1981). Also, though she stresses repeatedly that our "species being" was forged in a hunting-gathering context and that our natures and our art are adapted for that type of society (see p. 109), she devotes surprisingly little space in her text or her references to works on hunting-gathering life. Had she done so, I doubt that she could have posed the rhetorical query, "why are torture, cruelty and killing so easy to instill and so hard to eradicate ?" (p. 16), implying that these are all part of our inborn heritage, for none of those behaviors are typical of hunter-gatherers. Indeed, a comprehensive perusal of the literature on hunter-gatherer arts might have opened her central thesis to question. There is plenty of evidence for the importance of purely secular, non-ceremonial aesthetic activity among hunting gathering peoples (Mbuti singing and dancing, !Gwi instrumental music, and ! Kung story-telling come to mind), making "art for art's sake" as plausible an evolutionary scenario as "art for ceremony's sake."

Still more bothersome is Dissanayake's insistance on a qualitative "break" between the cognitive patterning of persons in preliterate cultures and those in postliterate cultures. Following C, R. Hallpike (1979) and, before him, Lucien Levy-Bruhl (1910, 1966), she characterizes people in the modern West as logical, rational, and aware that no single point of view enjoys monopoly on truth, in contrast to their traditional, non-Western counterparts. But by what yardstick does one judge as "logical" and "rational" the culture which perpetrated Auschwitz and Hiroshima and which is now cheerfully carrying out the wholesale destruction of the world ecosystem ? And how is it possible for an author presently living in Asia (Sri Lanka, to be exact) to maintain that it was the modern West which first proposed that the world we perceive with our senses may be illusory, and that there is not one "truth", but many ?

Even more perplexing is Dissanayake's refusal to include the popular arts and mass media in her discussion of Modern Western culture, or to draw on the rich literature on those topics in the field of communication studies—especially in view of her insistance that, when discussing "art" in other cultures, she is emphatically not restricting herself to what critics regard as "good" or "high" art. When discussing non-Western societies, she includes as "art" such activities as face-painting and scarification, arrangement of temple offerings, decoration of grain bins and

the like. But when she turns to the contemporary West, she inexplicably narrows her focus to "high" or "gallery" art, ignoring the influential areas of fashion, advertising, architecture and design, not to mention vibrant local movements in dance and theatre and multi-million industries based on television, films and pop music. In effect, the aborigine carving pleasing shapes on his boomerang is held up for contrast with Oscar Wilde, Marcel Duchamp, or some other aesthete out to *epater les bourgeoises;* little wonder that modern Western "art," so narrowly defined, seems elitist and non-"collective." Perhaps more disturbing, she never alludes to the complex politico-economic developments which would render comprehensible the marginalization of the modern Western artist; indeed, she skirts the whole issue of class stratification as a possible factor in the erosion of "socially shared significance" in the contemporary nation-state.

Finally, though her synthesis is original, many of the individual points Dissanayake offer as "new" have, in fact, been said before. Although she cites a wide and eclectic range of source material, she is either unaware of that fact or has deliberately chosen not to credit some eminent precursors. It's difficult to see, for example, how her key notion of "making special"(see p. 99) differs in any substantive way from Jacques Maquet's (1971) concept of "non-instrumental form," or why, in an extended discussion of "oceanic feelings" being traceable to experience in the womb, she ignores the work of Trigant Burrow. A long digression on psychologist Howard Gardner's research on "modes" and "vectors" as sources of our response to art is really a recasting of the old Lipps-Worringer "empathy hypothesis". Even her central points, that art and ritual are often intertwined and that art (like much ideational culture) functions to make us want to do what we must do in order to survive, have been stated many times by many authors.

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